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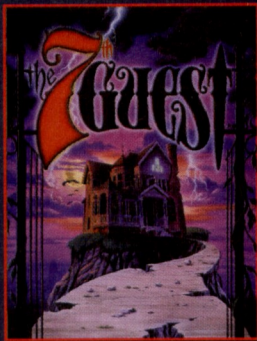
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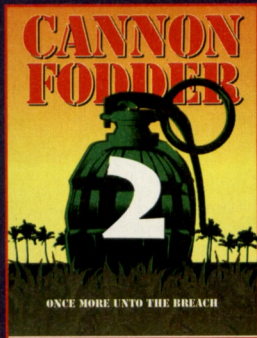
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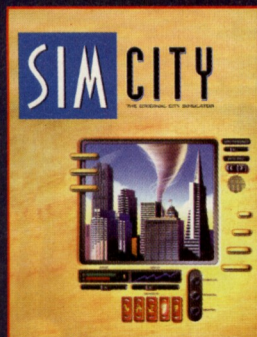
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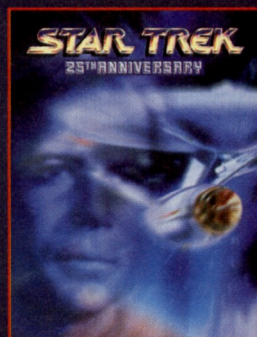
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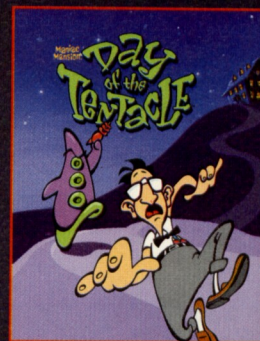
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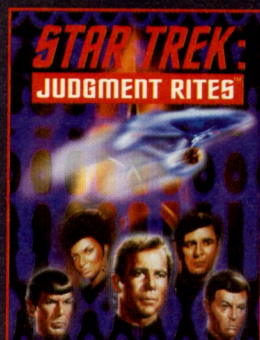
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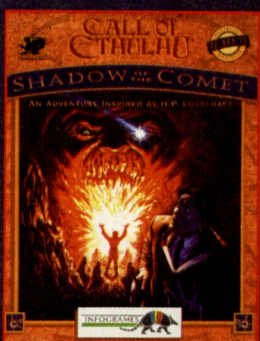
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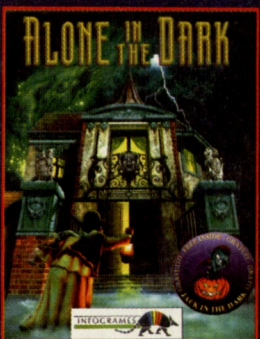
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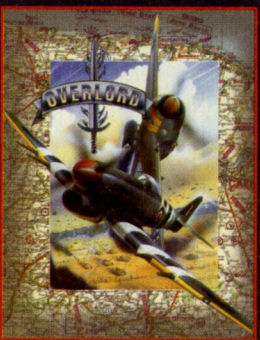
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19 Bolsover St
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Tel: 0171-631 1433
Fax: 0171-436 1321
Compuserve: 100142, 2152
CIX: PCZONE@CIX.compulink.co.uk

Editor John Davison; Deputy Editor Jeremy Wells;
Production Editor Thea Marcuard; Features Editor
Chris Anderson; Disk Editors Pete Hawley, Daniel
Emery; Reader Services Miles Tudor; Contributors
David McCormack (Design); Jane Golner (Design);
Amaya Lopez (Production); Charlie Brooker; Marcus
Bullen; Richard Cleves; David McCandless; Duncan
MacDonald; David Mathieson; Patrick McCarthy;
Andrew Mitchell; Gareth Ramsay; Paul Rigby;
Duncan Swain; Rob Tribe; Publisher Tim Ponting;
Subscriptions Hotline 01454 620070;
Back Issues 01789 490215; Assistant Advertising
Manager Mike Shepherd 0171-917 3873; Senior
Sales Executive Andrew Caddy 0171-917 3931;
Group Advertising Manager Alan Gonsalves;
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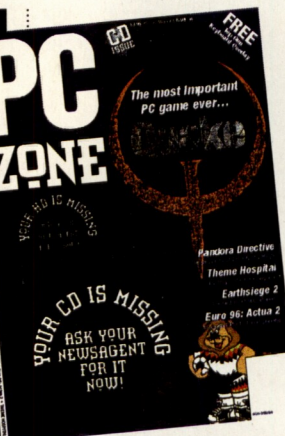
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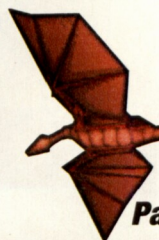
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CONTENTS



Quake

The single most important game on the PC... ever. We take an in-depth look at the first playable version of the game and look to the future to see what the finished product will include.



Page 44

BLUEPRINTS

- | | | | |
|--|-----------|--|-----------|
| Afterlife | 19 | Blam! Machinehead | 36 |
| LucasArts surprise us all by producing a supernatural strategy game set in heaven and hell. Has someone been putting something funny in the water at the Lucas HQ? | | Er... it's a girl with enormous tits strapped to the top of a guided missile. And it's the new 3D shoot 'em up from Core Design. Erm... excuse me? | |
| Actua Soccer Euro '96 | 22 | Fable | 38 |
| Actua Soccer is arguably the best soccer game of all time... PC Zone takes an exclusive look at the sequel, complete with its official Euro '96 licence thingy. | | The next glut of point-and-click adventures is likely to start any day now - and Telstar's new effort <i>Fable</i> is among the better looking ones. | |
| Vikings! | 26 | Pray For Death | 41 |
| Rape, pillage, plunder and er... fiddle about with your mouse in this new strategy game from GT Interactive. | | Cheap beat 'em ups ahoy! Virgin show us their forthcoming <i>Rise Of The Robots</i> beater. That'll be hard then. | |
| The Pandora Directive | 28 | Terra Nova | 42 |
| Access finally unveil the sequel to <i>Under A Killing Moon</i> , complete with aliens and Roswell stuff. | | Looking Glass Technologies' 3D robot blaster is very nearly finished... and about bloody time too. | |
| Theme Hospital | 33 | Zork Nemesis | 44 |
| Bullfrog are just about ready to throw us another weird one. A sim game about | | The sequel to <i>Return To Zork</i> that's actually the prequel to the entire <i>Zork</i> series. Er... hang on a mo'. | |

Games Directory

Actua Soccer Euro '96	22
Afterlife	19
ATF	76
Blam! Machinehead	36
C&C: The Covert Operations	67
Earthsiege 2	68
Fable	38
Kingdom O'Magic	63
Normality	58
PGA European Tour	72
Pray For Death	41
Speed Haste	70
Spycraft	84
S.T.O.R.M.	80
Terra Nova	42
Theme Hospital	33
The Pandora Directive	28
Vikings!	26
Virtual Snooker	87
Zork Nemesis	44

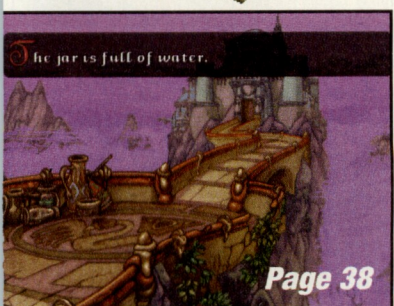
REVIEWS

Normality 58
Gremlin's ambitious 3D point-and-click adventure proves that you can still muck around with genres and come up with something new.

Kingdom O'Magic 63
More point-and-click fun, but this time with stereotypical gay hairdressers and women with huge boobs. Apparently it's quite funny sometimes.

C&C: The Covert Operations 67
Argh! Spooze. Spooze...
The mission disc for *Command & Conquer* is here - and it's totally bloody hard.

Earthsiege 2 68
Earthsiege is widely regarded as the best of all the big robot games, and now there's a sequel with better graphics, better sound effects and loads of new weapons.



Page 38



Page 63



Page 72

Speed Haste 70
Imagine a cross between *Virtua Racing* and *Daytona USA* that only costs twenty quid and doesn't look quite as good.

PGA European Tour 72
The greatest golf game in existence gets de-Yanked and tweaked a bit. Another classic from EA Sports.

ATF 76
The *US Navy Fighters* engine gets seriously spruced up and then introduced to a large number of 'conceptual' aircraft. Seriously good stuff for the propeller heads among you.

S.T.O.R.M. 80
Er... hang on, this looks like *Scramble*, but with much prettier graphics.

Spycraft 84
Activision have surprised us all with this one. Basically it's a 'spy simulator' with loads of FMV, loads of puzzles and some of the most original features we've seen for a long time.

Virtual Snooker 87
A year after *Virtual Pool*, we get the same game, only this time round it's with snooker balls and loads of FMV of Steve 'intensely dull' Davis. A complete video of a 147 break, anyone? No?

Pick 'n' Mix 90
Short, run-on reviews of the other games we received this month, plus budget releases from Kixx XL and White Label.

FEATURES

Quake 49
The first proper look at the most important game ever to grace the PC.

10 Ways To Speed Up Your PC 105
We show you the best ways to make that sloth of a PC a bit faster... and let you know which ways are cheaper.

HARDWARE

Gravis GRIP 111

SoundBlaster AWE32 PnP 112

COMPETITION

Congo 46
Win one of 20 pre-release copies of *Congo* on video! Be the envy of your friends and family by being able to watch it loads of times before anyone else has had the opportunity.

REGULARS

Bulletin 12

Back Issues 94

Cybertwats 95

PC Zone On-Line 98

Subscriptions 114

Troubleshooter 116

Buyer's Guide 122

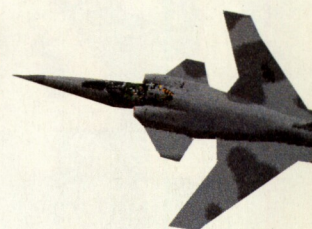
WordProcessor 134

Culky Says 137

Mr Cursor 138



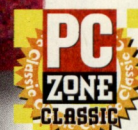
Page 68



Page 76



Page 12



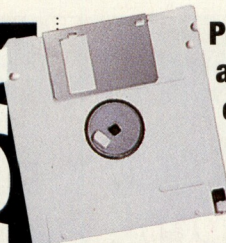
Page 58



C:\>Cover

Just
WASTED
£40
on a
GAME
that
SUCKS?
Never
mind...

HD DISK



Pop the disk in the floppy drive and launch the setup.exe from either the File Manager or Run... menu. The game will then install to the directory of your choice and create the appropriate

Program Groups on your Desktop, whether it's Windows 3.* or 95.

To run the AOL disk insert the floppy disk and run <SETUP.EXE> to install.

Gearheads (Philips)

Bit of a weird one this! Each player starts on opposite sides of the board with a boxful of wind-up toys. Using various items out of this box you have to get 21 toys across to the other side of the board to win. Full instructions and control options are included within the game's help menu.

Controls: Keyboard

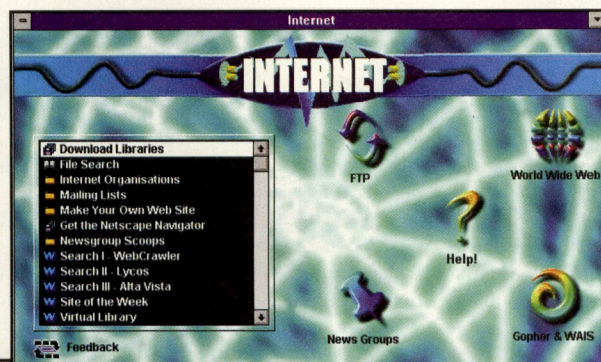
Specifications: 4Mb, Windows

AOL (AOL)

The latest version of the America On-Line access software. Ten hours free usage courtesy of PC Zone and AOL, Internet and Web access is included as standard. The software is very intuitive and a breeze to use, but if all this on-line stuff is new to you there is a full help file within the package.

Controls: Mouse

Specifications: 4Mb, Windows



(Right) Get on-line the easy way with AOL and enjoy ten hours of free access time.

(Right) Jump about and shoot things in the splendid *Terra Nova* demo.

Disk



To access the plethora of orgasmic playable demos on this *PC Zone Cover CD* change to your CD-ROM drive letter and type **<PCZONE>**. The menu is easy to use and simply clicking on the icon of the demo you want to run with the left mouse button will launch the installer for it automatically – just follow the on-screen instructions. **Windows 95 and Windows 3.* users should follow the same procedure, but from the DOS prompt.**

To access the Windows programs and demos please launch the **<BROWSER.EXE>** file from Windows Explorer or File manager and double-click the required program, utility or demo to install/run.

PLAYABLE DEMOS

Terra Nova (VIE)

Looking Glass Technologies caused something of a storm last year with the release of *Flight Unlimited*. Now, take to



the skies in their latest mission-based 3D action blast from Virgin. This fully playable demo gives you a good idea of what the final game is like – we reckon this is one of the smoothest and best looking 3D engines we've planted our eyes on for a while. Similar to *Terminal Velocity* in appearance but with a vastly superior landscape generation routine, it's impressive stuff! If you have trouble with the game, look at the readme.txt file in the *Terra Nova* directory.

Controls: Mouse, keyboard
Specifications: 8Mb

Grand Prix Manager (MicroProse)

To celebrate Damon Hill's victory at the opening Grand Prix in Melbourne try and see if you can help Herr Schumacher do a better job. MicroProse do the FIA license some justice at last in this playable demo of the first GP Management game to hit the PC. All of the actual drivers, cars, teams, sponsors and circuits are included as you progress through the 16 races of the season seeking victory in the driver's and constructor's World Championship.

Controls: Mouse
Specifications: 8Mb, Windows

Top Gun (MicroProse)

Cheesy Ray Bans and Tom Cruise analogies in this interactive Windows presentation provide you with the latest low-down and information on one of the biggest licensing coups of last year. Browse through this extensive multimedia presentation of one of the better flight sims. Parts of the game are on



show, as well as movie clips and music from one of the classic films of '80s.

Controls: Mouse
Specifications: 8Mb, Windows

Virtual Snooker (Interplay)

Do you remember *Virtual Pool*? Bloody excellent, wasn't it? Well, this is the snooker version, fully playable and completely addictive. Use the mouse to position the cue and then hold 'S' and 'hit' the ball. This game still has one of the most intuitive systems we've come across, and uses the same engine as *Virtual Pool*, but there are more balls and, er, well it's snooker.

Controls: Mouse
Specifications: 4Mb

Azrael's Tear (Mindscape)

Running this demo in hi-res, this first-person 3D adventure looks and plays incredibly well. This is brought to you courtesy of those very lovely people at Mindscape and Intelligent games, who you may recall were responsible for the excellent *Sim Isle*.

Controls: Keyboard, mouse
Specifications: 8Mb

Gearheads (Philips)

Please refer to the description in the HD section on page 8.

Seek and Destroy (Epic Megagames)

Apparently sharing the title with a rather good Metallica song, this is the latest shareware game to come from Epic Megagames in which you have to guide a tank around the war torn landscape annihilating everything in your path. Guide it through the fully-rotational 3D landscape using the radar at the bottom of the screen to find the enemy bases – and when you have, blast the crap out of them and then run off very quickly before they get the chance to radio their friends for help. This is the full shareware version of the game, don't forget to register with Epic!

Controls: Keyboard, joystick
Specifications: 4Mb

No CD?

If you are unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclose your HD from the cover plus a cheque for a whole £1 and send it to:

Miles Tudor, CD Exchange (38), PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover St, London W1P 7HJ

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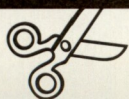
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CDs from previous issues are also available.

Phone Miles (never before 11.00 am) on: 0171-917 7693



(Right) Do they have low gravity in the land *Kingdom O'Magic* or do they all wear Wonder Bras? Play the demo and find out.



Kingdom O'Magic (SCI)

This is huuuge!! One of the biggest and best looking arcade adventures for ages, with plenty of 3D animation and character interaction to get stuck in to. You'll find full speech and character interaction in this comedy graphical caper where the busty heroine is confronted by strange mythical beasts and the attentions of randy, wandering warriors - uh!

Controls: Mouse

Specifications: 8Mb, Windows

Strife (Rogue Entertainment)

Rogue Entertainment have got their mitts on the *Doom* engine and produced another first-person adventure. But shock horror, you can talk and interact with characters. It's great - kill an innocent shopkeeper with a punch to the throat with a spikey glove and you can then fight all the guards that turn up after the alarm has been raised. Or you can be a bit of a wuss and play the game 'adventure' style! Type <SETUP> at the dos prompt to allocate your sound card and keyboard configuration; the default is the *Doom* set-up.

Controls: Keyboard, mouse

Specifications: 8Mb, DOS

Allied General (Mindscape)

Hex fans and strategy heads ahoy, this is your dream come true! This playable demo of everyone's hex heaven has one of the best wargame engines we've seen. Fairly complicated for the casual gamer but well worth the time and effort once you get stuck in and are used to the menu systems and strategies. Using the mouse simply click the units you want to move or send into battle and click on the enemy units to attack them. Relive some of the classic battles throughout the WW2 Africa campaign.

Controls: Mouse

Specifications: 8Mb, Windows 95

Bud Tucker in Double Trouble (Merit)

Rik Mayall adds his unique blend of insanity and humour to this graphic adventure. You can guide Bud through the various scenes with the mouse - use the simplistic description icons at the bottom of the screen to perform actions and initiate conversations and stuff. Good, solid, wholesome fun!

(This was a late arrival so it's not listed on the CD label.)

Controls: Mouse

Specifications: 8Mb

Thexder '95 (Sierra)

If you like guiding small blokes around complicated levels collecting weapons and shooting things, then this is for you. Guide Thexder around the demo levels collecting power-ups, jetpacking about the place and shooting bad guys.

Controls: Keyboard

Specifications: 8Mb, Windows 95

WinCim 2.01 (CompuServe)

This most recent version of CompuServe access software includes Web and Internet access and free access time. Newbies to CompuServe should check out these forums to get them up and running. Hit the 'Go...' button and type <ACTION> <GAMEPUB> and <VIDEO GAMES> to access the three best game areas around.

Controls: Keyboard, mouse

Specifications: 4Mb, Windows

UTILITIES

Essentials

Sorry - this month's disc is packed to the rafters so the essentials had to go! See you next month... **Z**



Help!

The CD not working? HD playing up? The PCs just being a total bast? Then just relax, chill out, have a cold shower and then phone the relevant help line:

HD DISK HELP

Phone Matthew on 01274 738890

Any week day between 9am and 4pm.

CD-ROM HELP

Phone Miles Tudor on 0171-917 7883

Any week day between 11am and 6pm.

(DO NOT phone earlier as your calls will NOT be answered.)

If you are calling either help line, then please take note of the following points:

- If possible have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down as much relevant information as possible ie system type, sound card, RAM etc plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.



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BULLETIN

Command & Conquer: Red Alert

THE SEQUEL TO QUITE POSSIBLY ONE of the greatest games ever is now very imminent – well, ear-marked for around September anyway.

Command & Conquer: Red Alert is not a sequel in the real sense of the word, but more of a prequel, as it is set *before* the original *Command & Conquer* 'happened'. Why? Well apparently, Westwood have decided to go back to the very beginning and try to set the story straight as far as the rise to power of the infamous NOD and explain just how and why Tiberium came to be so important.

The tale will be told in the familiar in-er face video flick fashion and there will be loads of the ultra cool cut-scenes interspersed between all the action to

keep the plot rolling along at a respectable rate of knots.

And as far as the actual gameplay is concerned, Westwood maintain that as well as

coming up with some stupendously tricky missions (if you've seen just how hard *The Covert Operations* mission disc reviewed on page 67 is, you'll know that they mean serious business), they've been tweaking away at the AI (Artificial Intelligence) and sorting out the one or two minor, but incredibly annoying, bugs that plagued the original game (ie those stupid harvesters and dubious sandbagging shenanigans).

Graphically, it looks pretty similar to the original. There's still no sight or sound of a hi-res mode, though if the screenshots we've got are anything to go by, it still looks hunk, and indeed dory in an 'I know I'm small but isn't there a lot going on?' kind of way. The music is also apparently well up to the standard of the original game and the new mission disc (ie F.A.B.) and there's allegedly loads of new weapons, personnel and kick-ass hardware to get to grips with – including submarines.

(Above right) Expect more of the slick cut-scenes and another in-er face intro to keep you gagging for more.

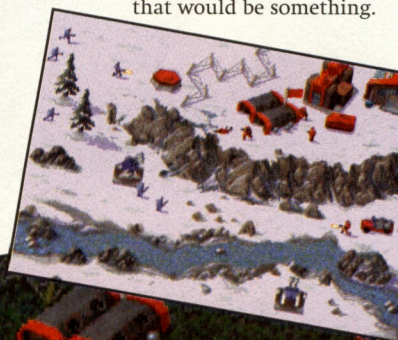
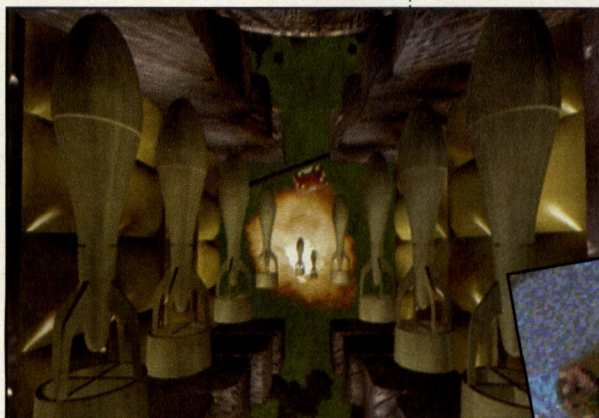
(Left) No real changes in style as far as the in-game graphics are concerned, but then that's not such a bad thing.

(Below right) Still no sight nor sound of a hi-res mode, but Westwood reckon they've developed a much tighter AI and eliminated the niggling bugs that pestered the original game.



Westwood are also rumoured to have been developing the multi-player network side of the game (which, if you haven't played it yet, is quite tremendous), though there is no official line on whether *Red Alert* will be Wireplay compatible. Let's hope they sort something out sharpish.

With the Bitmap's Z still tucked up in bed catching up on its beauty sleep while the team tear all their hair out trying to get the network play well and truly sorted, it's feasible that Westwood could pull off the *coup* of the decade and manage to get a mission disc and a sequel out in the same time that it has taken the Bitmaps to produce Z. Now that would be something.



X-COM: The Apocalypse

MicroProse are hard at work on the third instalment in the phenomenally addictive *X-COM* series. The next game in the series is being designed by the Gollop Brothers, the team behind *UFO – Enemy Unknown*. Anyone familiar with the first two games will remember the addictive turn-based strategy sections. *Apocalypse* will still offer players the option to fight their battles by taking turns against the computer, but it will also have a new real-time option for even more realistic battle action.

We were given an early preview of the game and it's looking superb, even at this stage in the production. The familiar 'Geoscape' has gone and has been replaced with the much bigger and far more detailed 'Cityscape'. The game is set in a city called Megalopolis, where you'll find most of the characters, including councillors, corporate bosses and gang leaders.

As leader of *X-COM*, the player has to monitor his relationship with all of these factions as well as keeping an eye on the alien threat. The *X-COM* agents in the game are now more competent than ever before, with new abilities

such as interrogation, engineering, driving and flying skills, making them more effective in the battle against the aliens. In addition to this probably the biggest new feature is the addition of a network option, which will allow you to take on your mates at world management once you've completed the proper game.

We are hoping to pay the developers a visit very soon to take a closer more in-depth look at how they're getting on with the game, so look out for a full preview next month.

Lands of Lore 2

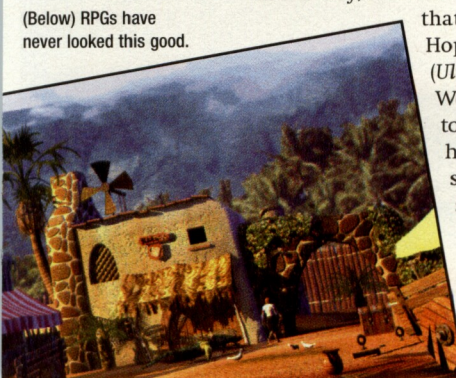
WITH DECENT RPGS thinner on the ground than Norwich City supporters, fans of the genre will be pleased to hear that Westwood are still working hard on the sequel to *Lands of Lore*. Virgin can't tell us much about the game

at the moment, but the PC *Zone* crystal ball tells us that it will probably be in svga, and is likely to be even bigger and better, and also wash whiter than its predecessor. We're also prepared to lay money on the fact that it will feature spellcasting, role-playing, and a character development system that makes all the people in your team get better at whatever it is they're doing as the game progresses.

Either way, it's bound to be a massive improvement over the first game, considering that it's taking Westwood an absolute age to get it all together. Hopefully we'll see a much more realistic playing environment (*Ultima Underworld 96* perchance?) and an enhanced AI engine. We'll be keeping an eye on this one as it's quite possibly going to be one of the biggest releases of the year, although Virgin have voiced fears that the proposed on-sale date could possibly slip into next year. In the meantime though, here are a few screenshots to whet your appetite (which we suspect are from a pre-rendered intro or something).



(Above) Yep, they're still hard at it, but don't expect to see anything playable 'til early next year.



(Below) RPGs have never looked this good.



(Left) Hopefully the parking facilities in *X-COM: The Apocalypse* will be better.

(Far left) As well as a lush new graphics style, players can opt to play *Apocalypse* in real-time or in the good old-fashioned 'turn-based' mode. Multi-player network play will be supported too.

Dispatches

+++ The Home PC Show

If you're looking to buy a new PC, upgrade your existing system, or you just want to know more about getting on-line or how to use the Internet, then you should make your way to The Home PC Show at Earls Court between 30 May and 2 June.

This year the show features a special 'On-line and Internet' area, free advice theatres, interactive demonstrations, Internet tutorials and special show offers from the likes of HP, Compaq, UK On-Line and Dorling Kindersley, while supermarket giant Tesco will be launching their new on-line shopping service.

Call the ticket hotline on 0171-341 0010 or see the Web site at <http://homepc.co.uk> for further details.

+++ Perfect Strategy

Instant Access have just announced details of a brilliant new strategy compilation package. For just under 30 quid you get the classics *Battle Isle 2*, *Titan's Legacy* and *The Patrician* which together had an original recommended retail price of over £110. The three game pack should be available by the time you read this and is expected to retail for £29.99 or less. Contact Instant Access on 0181-205 2596 for more information.

+++ Formula for success

With MicroProse's *F1GP2* only just on the shelves, three other publishing houses have let slip that they are currently working on their very own Formula One games. Firstly, there's *Pole Position: Formula 1 Team Manager* from Anco, a sort of management sim that's due out next month; then there's the game known only as *F1* which we can reveal is currently being developed for both the PSX and the PC; and last but by no means least, we've just heard that Novalogic are also working on a "top secret" Formula One game, though no one will confess to knowing anything about it. As someone said once: "You saw it here first."

+++ Archer Maclean is back

Virgin Interactive have signed up gaming guru Archer Maclean to work on a whole range of products due for release next year. This time round Archer has abandoned his one-man-band approach and is currently assembling a new development team to be known as Awesome Developments. Presumably he got lonely sitting in his Ferrari all by himself.





(Far left) Bryan Gunn makes a dramatic save (if only the rest of Norwich could get their act together).

(Left) Ipswich Town's Simon Milton shows off his ball skills.

(Below) Developers Phoenix try and motion capture Bryan Gunn doing the Can-Can.

Dispatches

+++ EA get McLaren

EA haven't got a Formula One game in the pipeline (as far as we know), but they have just announced details of a new partnership with 1995 Le Mans champions McLaren. *McLaren At Le Mans* is due for release later this year and will allow players to get behind the wheel of one of the exotic McLaren F1 GTs which can reach speeds of up to 220 mph. As well as featuring FMV footage of last year's race, the game will sport a simulation and arcade mode, which means players can take part in fully simulated races which last up to 24 hours (!). To make it extra realistic, the developers have used the actual physics models that calculate slip angles, wing loadings, tyre pressures and suspension etc, while the texture-mapped cars, course and objects have been created using Microsoft Direct 3D, one of the most advanced 3D engines available.

Look out for a full preview of *McLaren '96* in next month's ish.

+++ Anime screensaver

If Japanese fisticuffs are your thang, you might be interested to hear that Anime Projects have just released a screensaver based on the 'Bubblegum Crisis' hyper high-tech sci-fi action series. The screensaver features detailed images and FMV segments of *The Knight Sabers*, the techno-glamourpuss cyberheroes of the hit television series who pop up when your machine is idling and perform all kinds of uber fisticuffs. As you might expect, *The Knight Sabers* screensaver is also equipped with such useful things as password protection, mouse location start-up and other customisable features. It's Windows 3.1 and 95 compatible, and will even work on a Mac.

For further details contact Anime Projects on 01248 370044.

+++ Telstar announce big signings

Telstar have brought in three heavyweight signings to promote their brand new footie game called *Onside*.

Developed by Midlands-based Elite Systems, *Onside* features "intuitive, realistic" gameplay, a full match commentary and a powerful 3D engine developed in-house. It will also sport inner-perimeter advertising by fast food giants McDonald's, Reebok are using the game to promote their new 'top secret' soccer brand in May and Manchester United keeper Peter (Rudolph) Schmeichel has been hired to promote the game in the UK.

Quite whether the game will live up to the massive expectations of the producers is anyone's guess, though the situation should be a lot clearer come 22 May, when the game is launched at the European Champions League Finals in Rome.

Phoenix Soccer

IT SEEMS THAT EVERYONE AND HIS DAD ARE WORKING on a football game at the moment, and Mindscape are no exception. Their football game is so cutting edge and new that they haven't even given it a name yet, so it's being codenamed *Phoenix Soccer* after the team who is developing it.

What they are shouting about however, is the impressive fact that they've managed to get Scottish International and Norwich City keeper Brian Gunn and Ipswich Town's midfield maestro Simon Milton to help out with the motion capture stuff that will be used in the game. "We want the players in our game to move as realistically as possible, so we've got two top professionals to come in and be motion captured. It means a lot of extra work, not to mention cost to get professional footballers to come in, have plastic balls stuck to their bodies and dive around the place, but we feel it'll be worth it," maintains the lead artist at Phoenix. "Hand-drawn and animated sprites like those used in *FIFA* look very dated now, and we want our game to be real cutting edge."

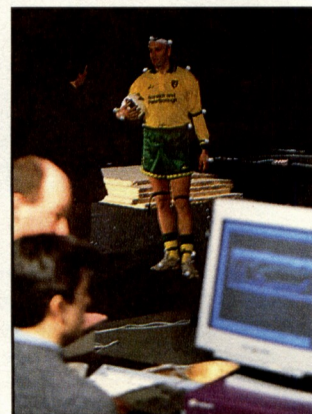
As far as in-game stuff is concerned, Phoenix are playing things very cool and remaining tight-lipped as to exactly how it will look and play: "It's going to be a sort of mix between *Actua Soccer* and *FIFA*," reveals the lead programmer. "What we've tried to do is take the speed and presentation of *FIFA* and mix it with the detailed and smooth graphics of *Actua*. The result is hopefully players that look as detailed as those in *Actua*, but move

as fast as those in *FIFA*."

So if all goes to plan it should look and move like *Ginola*, but what of the gameplay?

"At the moment we're toying with all the different playing styles and working on the AI - the most difficult bit. We all love playing footie games, but we all like different ones. I'm a great fan of *Actua*, the artists are still playing *Sensi* and the other programmers all swear by *FIFA*, so what we're trying to do is implement all the styles and features of each game and then let the player decide how they play - whether they want the ball to stick to their feet or fly around the pitch, for example. Everyone's got their own ideas about how a football game should look and play, hopefully what we're working on will do the impossible and appeal to everyone who likes football. It's a tall order, but we're confident that we can do something pretty special."

Phoenix Soccer is due to be released at the end of the year.



EA have gone Fishin'

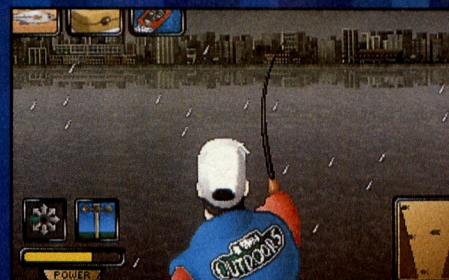
In an attempt to boldly go where no software publisher (except Sierra) has gone before, Electronic Arts have decided to release a fishing simulation from developers American Softworks Corporation.

Curiously entitled *TNN Outdoors Bass Tournament '96*, it features six SVGA 'Virtual Lakes' from around the USA (so they're quite big), where players can catch such fine-finned fancies as bass, crappies and catfish (among others). As you'd expect there's loads of different lures, bait, rods and reels to choose from, two hidden lakes (?) and on-line help from US fishing expert Fish Fishbourne (that's his real name, honest - if you don't believe us phone EA), who will pop up now and then to give you helpful tips on how to land the biggest catch of the day. Once you've chosen your tackle, it's time to pull on your waders and start that outboard. When you've found a suitable spot, you cast out and wait 'til you get a bite, controlling the drag and run on the bait to keep it at the appropriate depth using your mouse button. All simple stuff you might think, but the tricky bit comes when you get a bite and have to start reeling in your fish without breaking your line, which means carefully controlling the drag and

tension - gripping stuff. It might sound a bit anal, but after one or two casts, you really will be hooked (ahem).

Undoubtedly, the best feature of *TNN Outdoors Bass Tournament '96* however, is the fact that you get to hump around the lakes in a mini speed boat as you search for fish using your on-board ultra-sound. There's no water ski option as yet, but there will be seasonal weather conditions to contend with and three levels of play: Free Fishing, Junior Tournament and Senior Tournament.

TNN Outdoors Bass Tournament '96 is due for release at the end of April.

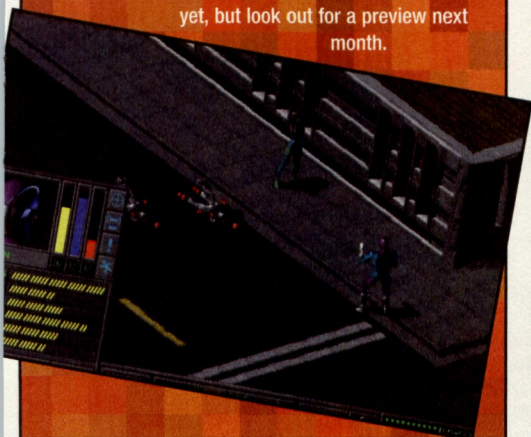


Superheroes

Following the success of *X-COM*, MicroProse are working on a new turn-based strategy game, which takes a similar vein but has fantasy characters taking the lead role.

Superheroes (working title) gives you your very own team of superheroes to lead into battle against the forces of the Claw, the Tech Lords, and the Shadowyn. You'll come up against combat troopers, ninjas, warbots, mutants and arch criminals as you struggle to find the locations of the three villains' headquarters. The heroes you control in the game will develop special abilities allowing them to fly across the landscape, teleport and use X-ray vision against their enemies.

Superheroes is still in an early stage of development so no firm release date has been announced as of yet, but look out for a preview next month.



Doggy style for Windows

MINDSCAPE HAVE SIGNED UP THE CANINE sensation that has been sweeping the nation Stateside known as *Dogz*.

Simply by downloading the demo from the net, or accessing it via a cover CD, PC users can choose from five different breeds of computer generated puppies and choose to adopt one, making it their very own. As time goes by, your puppy will eventually grow into a big strong Windows mutt who you can teach tricks and leave to guard your PC when you're not around. Take care however - feed him too much and he will lie around and sleep all day, but fail to give him enough attention and he'll become withdrawn and unfriendly. Each dog develops its own traits, personality and looks and is guaranteed to be a friend for life.

The full product is available from Mindscape for £14.99 (01444 246333) or you can access the demo from the Mindscape Web site. A Catz disk is also apparently on the way, which will walk around your screen ignoring you and messing up your furniture.



Dispatches

+++ Piranha

Newcomers to the PC games market OTM have a frenetic new 360 degree arcade shoot 'em up on the way, entitled *Piranha*. Best described as an *Asteroid* clone for the '90s, it's a spiny, shooty, thrusty about the screeny affair that will no doubt appeal to the hardened arcade fan who was brought up on a diet of Dexy's *Midnight Runners*, *Galaxians* and the aforementioned arcade classic *Asteroids* and is sickening for some good old-fashioned shoot 'em up action. As well as a massive 120 levels, there are heaps of power-ups, bonus levels and a three-player deathmatch mode. *Piranha* will also run quite happily on a 486DX with 4Mb of RAM, so if you fancy some 2D blasting from the past, give OTM a call on 01827 312302 to find out more.

+++ More Worms

Worms: Reinforcements from Team 17 is set to take the highly popular strategy game to new heights with a completely new mission-based single-player game in response to the criticism that the original game was a tad boring in single-player mode. The new mission disk features six new audio tracks, new weapons and all sorts of other completely new things that Team 17 believe will enhance the single-player experience. *Reinforcements* should be out by the time you read this. The price hasn't been confirmed yet, but if you're asked to part with more than 20 quid we reckon they saw you coming.

+++ More Hexen

Hexen addicts desperate for another fix of their fave game will be relieved to know that a rather comprehensive mission disk for the game is on the way.

Hexen: Deathkings Of The Dark Citadel takes up the story where *Hexen* left off. Having fought your way to the end of the original game and got hold of the coveted Chaos Sphere, the new game begins with you being transported to the realm of the dead where your sphere is useless. The only way to get out of this place is to go and find the Deathkings of the Dark Citadel and give them a good kicking. The game features 20 brand new levels, as well as special additional Deathmatch levels, all of which have been designed by Raven and id. *Deathkings Of The Dark Citadel* should be out now for a smidgen under £20. For more information, call GT Interactive on 0171-258 3791.

Flight sticks on a budget

Spectra Video have just announced a new line of flight sticks for those not mad enough to go out and spend hundreds of pounds on the heavyweight Thrustmaster gear to play their two flight sims, called *Flight Force*.

Two flight sticks will launch the range. First up is the PC *Flight Force Joystick*, which features four independent 'Smart' autofire switches, an analogue throttle control, four-way view switches, unique 'Mega Zoom' calibration and a strong heavy base for extra stability. The PC *Flight Force Fire Control System* is designed to be used in conjunction with the *Flight Force Joystick* and features nine programmable buttons (with memory back-up), a four-position analogue throttle control (off, idle, afterburner and full throttle), a multi-viewer, an LED status indicator and the same unique Mega Zoom calibration.

You can't expect these sticks to compete with the more expensive ones, but at just £39.99 and £49.99 respectively, it's a pretty cheap way of getting your hands on some dedicated flight sim controllers.

Contact Spectra Video on 0181-900 0024 for further details.

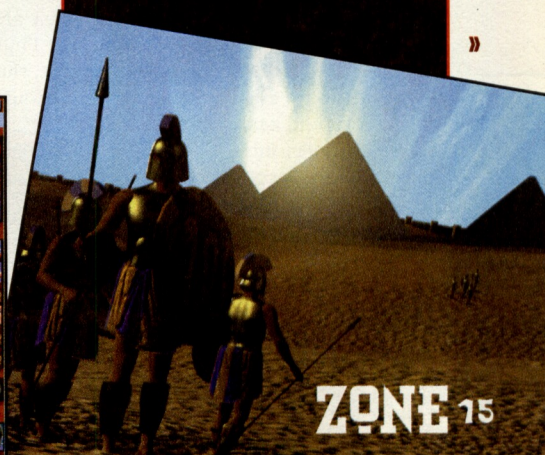
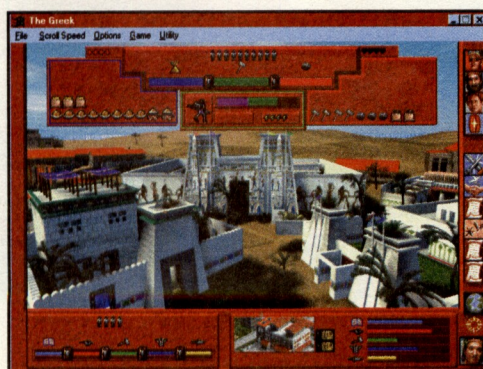


The Rise & Rule of Ancient Empires

YET ANOTHER CIV-STYLE STRATEGY SIM COMES lolling onto the scene, this time from Sierra. *The Rise & Rule of Ancient Empires* is not just your average 'sail about and colonise' affair however, as it spans 5000 years and players can opt to play as any one of the six great historical empires (Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman etc). Each historical 'age' features building and architectural styles of the era, and players can 'command and conquer' the surrounding environs by fair means or foul, choosing to develop their military might or forging links with their trading neighbours. Unlike most other strategy titles that require the player to spend at least 30 hours going through the game before reaching the meat, *Ancient Empires* can be played in just two to four hours depending

on the difficulty of the scenario (apparently there are loads). Four-way network or modem play is also supported, and there's an on-line help and tutorial facility to get the player into the game with the minimum of fuss.

Ancient Empires is due for release in April from Sierra and will be Windows compatible.





(Left) *Toobers: Surf & Destroy* – coming soon from Grolier.

Grolier line up six for the summer

French developer Grolier have six (yes six) new games coming out over the next few months. First up is the highly original *Banzaï Bugs*, an arcade style 'fly-ght sim' with a difference. Players control their very own airborne bug which they must use to drive unfriendly humans out of their home so they can live in peace. The game features cartoon-style graphics, a fixed 'chase' view and a multi-player network option and is expected to hit the shelves in May.

On a more serious note is *Battle Of The Ironclads*, an American Civil War strategy simulation that recreates the naval battle of 1862 between the Confederate's 'Virginia' and the Union's 'Monitor' ironclad battleships. As well as giving players the opportunity to recreate and replay this historic battle, there are numerous other scenarios to play out, as well as the option to go head-to-head using a network or modem.

Sticking with the strategy theme, *Battleships Of Stone* is a first-person perspective medieval strategy game that requires the player to protect their castle from marauding miscreants set on taking it over. Players have to consult with architects on how to best prepare and defend their castle while taking care to keep their personnel fed, watered and fighting fit. This unique game sports a powerful 3D engine that allows the player to walk around their castle, plus FMV excerpts to add atmosphere and pace to the siege sequences. *Battleships Of Stone* is due for release in the summer.

Also due for release later in the year is the oddly titled *Toobers: Surf And Destroy*, which is best described as a 3D puzzle/action/adventure game. Then there's *Engines Of Change*, a 'science fantasy' interactive adventure game based on real events and places developed by Vortex, and lastly comes *The Perfect Assassin*, a fantasy RPG set in the mould of science fiction comics.



(Above) *Banzaï Bugs*: a new and highly original arcade-style fly-ght sim due for release soon.

(Right) Millennium reckon that the AI in *Deadline* is so advanced it learns how you play and then starts to anticipate your next move – pretty clever stuff, eh?

Deadline

Deadline (don't we love that word) is a new strategy style game from Millennium that looks not unlike *Jagged Alliance* from SirTech (and released by Mindscape) with a dose of *X-COM* and maybe just a dash of *Syndicate* thrown in for good measure.

Viewing the action from a 3D isometric angle, players must direct their squad of crack tough blokes through a variety of missions, blowing lots of things up and shooting nasty terrorist type blokes. As you'd expect, there are loads of different characters to choose from (each with their own particular strengths and weaknesses) and oodles of different missions to complete. Millennium have apparently spent ages developing an AI (artificial intelligence) that's so damn clever, it actually learns and anticipates the player's next move! We'll find out whether this a complete load of cobblers next month when we review it – until then you can ring Millennium on 01223 844894 to find out more.



Rally Fever

Team 17 are putting the finishing touches to their new driving game, *World Rally Fever*.

Team 17 have focused squarely on pure arcade action, so players won't have to waste time messing about with setting up their car before they race. With *Rally Fever* you simply jump into your motor, stick your foot on the accelerator and disappear into the sunset.

You can hurtle your buggy around 16 tracks, with ten locations to choose from, all the time dropping boxes on the road to piss your opponents off. Power-ups come in the form of turbo boosts, invincibility pick-ups, and various weapons. The locations you can drive around in include the English countryside, the Nevada desert,



Downtown Tokyo and the snowy Tibetan mountains.

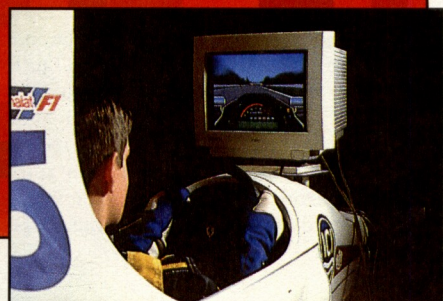
Rally Fever should be out by the time you read this. For more information contact Team 17 on 01924 267766.



Brave new wheel

Interactive Racing Ltd are about to give Thrustmaster a run for their money in the PC driving accessories arena, with the release of their new driving wheel and pedals.

The GP500 Race Centre kit consists of a 10-inch race wheel, F1-style paddle gear levers, a separate pedal box with accelerate and brake functions, two steering-mounted push buttons and a multicolour LED gear change/systems indicator. If you're mad you can buy a VMS unit (which apparently gives you the feeling of movement) and a Turbo Blower (which, er, creates the illusion of speed). If you're terminally insane, you can buy an F1 race car bodysuit and stick the whole lot in there, as the Race Centre has been designed to fit into one of these 'pretend' cars. If you're loaded and want the full experience, you can buy a *real* Formula 1 car for a few million pounds and drive it round your kitchen or something. The GP500 retails at an astonishing £249.99 (plus VAT) and is fully compatible with all your faves, such as *F1GP2*, *IndyCar 2*, *Screamer*, *The Need For Speed*, *NASCAR* etc. For more details contact RC Simulations on 01275 474550.



(Left) It's not exactly *Ridge Racer*, but then it's got 16 different tracks.

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(Left) Cock things up and hordes of demons will destroy everything you've created.

Afterlife

Is there life after death? Why are girls crap at computer games? Will Chelsea win the premier league? **Chris Anderson** answers none of these questions in his preview of LucasArts' new strategy game.

Three steps to heaven

Probably the best way for me to get across to you how *Afterlife* plays is to take you through the initial stages of the game. When you first start time is 'frozen'. There are three things you have to do before you start the clock ticking.

1. Build a gate.
It doesn't matter whether you start in Heaven or in Hell, 'cos either way you'll need gates. Let's face it, you won't have many souls if they can't get into the bloody place.



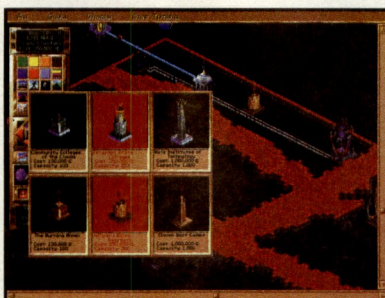
2. Zone and develop areas for the seven deadly sins, and their opposite virtues. You decide whether a soul should be placed in a bad zone or a good one based on what they've done in their previous life.



3. Build Karma stations. If a soul believes in reincarnation, you'll need to get him back to his own world. Karma stations allow you to do this providing they are linked up to the correct portal. Once you've done all this you're on your own. Simply start the clock running and watch your world develop (or fall to pieces) before your very eyes.

LUCASARTS SEEM TO HAVE GIVEN UP trying to produce another adventure to rival the famous *Monkey Island* series and instead turned their attention towards the world of strategy titles. *Afterlife* is a strategy game in the mould of *Sim City*, *Transport Tycoon* and *Populous* and all the other God games that put you in charge of hundreds of little people with the awesome task of managing their daily activities.

However, *Afterlife* is more than a little bit different to the aforementioned games. To start with, it isn't set in the

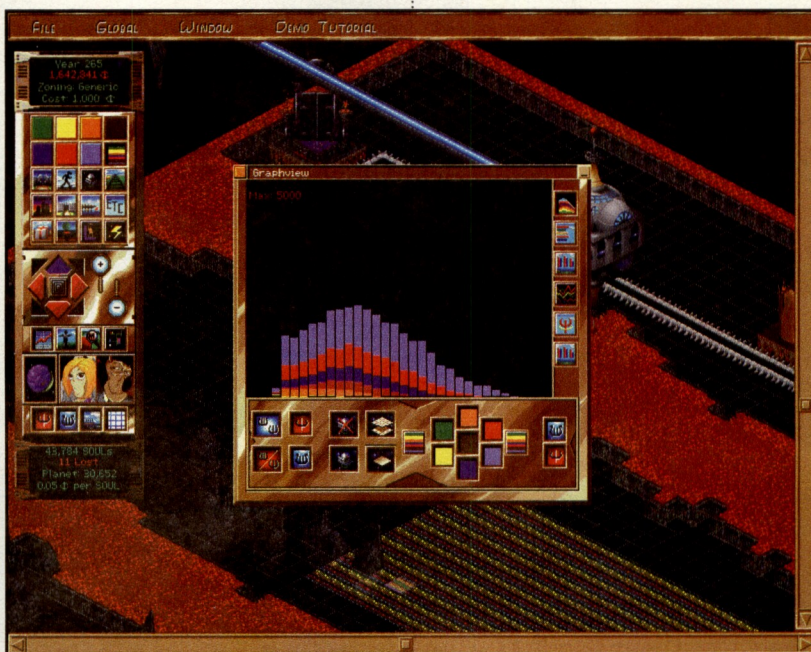


Product details

Developer: LucasArts
Publisher: Virgin
Telephone: 0171-368 2255
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: May

'real world' as we know it. It's an off-beat strategy game that lets you decide whether the lost souls from a humanoid alien world rest peacefully in Heaven, rot in Hell, or make their way back to the living world. Sounds weird? It is! The designers decided that a game with a real world scenario that put you in charge of real people (such as *Sim City*) wouldn't give them enough scope to create something genuinely original.

As Mike Stemmle, project leader on *Afterlife* puts it: "*Afterlife* isn't constrained by the built-in rules and assumptions of reality-based sims because after all, no one really has much of a clue about the



(Right) Somewhat appropriately, you get around Hell with the help of London Transport.

hereafter, including myself. It's an unconventional and unique take on the genre that's both irreverent and staggeringly silly."

Having had a lengthy go at a demo, I have to agree with Mike that it is indeed irreverent, although I must have missed something somewhere if I was meant to come across something "staggeringly silly". If anything, despite the 'wacky' theme of *Afterlife*, I still felt like I was doing all the same things I did when I played *Sim City* et al, such as building roads, looking at graphs full of statistical data and building places for people to live in. This may or may not be down to the fact that our demo doesn't have all the features that will be available in the final version - I'll be able to give you the answer to that when I get a look at the finished product. However, there was certainly enough to do in the demo to give me a pretty good idea what the game is all about...

Save our souls

Despite being a reasonably complex strategy game, *Afterlife* is fairly easy to get into. You start off with a rather simplistic-looking screen that shows the so far uninhabited domains of Heaven and Hell. As the game progresses, lost souls will come to see you and you have to send them off to their rightful place (Heaven if they've led a good life, hell if they were rotters, and limbo if you want to bore them silly). If souls believe in Heaven, you'll have to pop them in there and build somewhere for them to live; if they believe in reincarnation, you'll have to find some way of getting them back to the world of the living. If

(Bottom right) These are topias. Build lots of these for your souls to live in.

(Below) This is a graphic artist's representation of a soul. Convincing, isn't it?



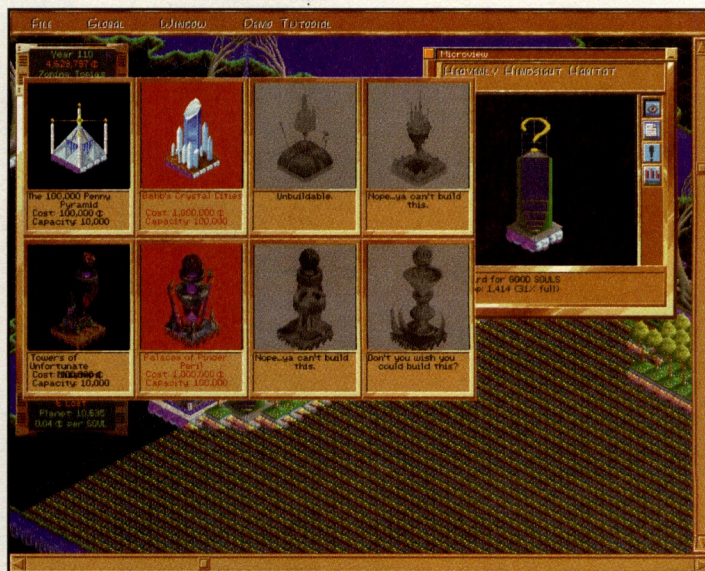
you successfully place souls in their rightful place you will get 'pennies from heaven'. You can then use this money to further expand your realms, making more room for new souls in the process.

If you cock things up, your little reign as deity will come to a swift end. Various things can happen when this situation arises: for instance, you may see a disco dancer enjoying a boogie across the screen, destroying all your buildings in the process, or you may see the 'Hell Freezes Over' ending which creates an icy catastrophe that plunges the game

into deep freeze, or you may be treated to the zany 'Heaven's Nose' ending... which shows a giant nose sucking up everything you've created.

All of this end sequence tomfoolery is no doubt meant to add to the 'wackiness' of the whole game, but I've got to admit it didn't do all that much for me. However, there are certain elements in *Afterlife* that give me reason to believe that LucasArts may be on to a winner. The on-line tutorial, for example, is an excellent idea - if you go through it step by step you'll be up and running in about 15 minutes. The ability to track individual souls as they wander around Heaven and Hell is quite impressive too.

Oddball qualities aside, *Afterlife* looks as though it could be a challenging and entertaining strategy game when it's finished. The graphics aren't up to much, but then seasoned strategists are quite happy to play games with knob presentation as long as the gameplay's up to scratch. We'll bring you a full review of the game next month. **Z**





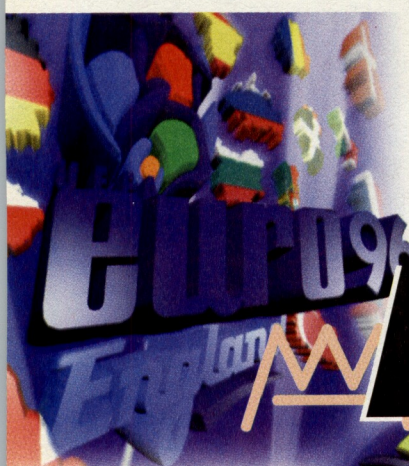
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IN PRODUCTION



Actua Soccer Euro '96

It's *Actua Soccer*. And it's the Euro '96 version. If **Patrick McCarthy** were to be named with equally rigid discipline, he'd be called something totally different.

(Below, right) I say, now he's a strapping young fella, isn't he? He didn't have to bring his lunchbox with him onto the pitch though. Erm, each player is a lot more detailed than before and uses about twice as many polygons.



(Right) Although not fully implemented as we go to press, the in-game graphics have been altered considerably with more polygons and animations for each player.

IT WON'T BE LONG NOW BEFORE THE streets of our cities will be chocka with happy laughing foreigners, merrily getting in the way at the bottom of Underground escalators, a plate of boiled beef in one hand and a flagon of warm beer in the other, daft flags painted on their faces, their hearts swelling with the joyous thought that their football teams are the best. And what are we going to do about it? (Apart from laugh at anyone stupid enough to eat British beef, that is...) We're going to thrash them to within an inch of their lives, that's what we're going to do. At *Actua Soccer*, anyway. Because the Gremlin boys have spent every day since *Actua Soccer* came out working on *Actua Soccer Euro '96* —



the officially licensed game of the tournament. And there's lots of stuff that wasn't in the original, such as goalies who now act as if they might have a central nervous system. And other stuff. Let's get on with it.

There are many more motion-captured animations both before and during the game. At the start, for example, players no longer merely stand in a line wobbling their shoulders slightly from side to side like quadriplegics attempting one of

Showaddywaddy's routines — they have a whole new range of actions to perform. One might be jiggling up and down to stay warm, another bending from side to side to keep his leg muscles stretched, while a third may be busy with his hand inside his shorts, making sure that he'll be in a position to impress the Queen when she arrives to (reluctantly) shake his hand. (At least it'll be warm.)

During the game, more animations show players pleading with the ref when they're booked, rolling about in pretend agony when they're fouled, and leaping feet first into the crowd when they're sent off. There are also new animations for the ref: firing off Nazi salutes, groping forward blindly while waving white sticks, drawing varicose veins on their spindly white legs with biro... oh, alright, we didn't see the ref animations. It's a fair cop.



Product details

Developer: Gremlin Interactive

Publisher: Gremlin Interactive

Telephone: 01142 753423

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: May

Blind Phew

Talking of the partially sighted, there have been a number of much-needed tweaks to the goalkeepers – for a start, they no longer stand rooted to the spot like a certain English goalkeeper in a certain Cup Winners Cup Final while the ball drops into the net behind them. Neither are they quite so crap at dealing with shots that bounce just in front of their feet (previously, when they fell to the floor you expected Barry Davies to shout, “Oooh, Vic, I’ve fallen.”) Anyone who’s seen the PlayStation version will have seen the improvements, and will no doubt be reassured to know that they’ll be included in this format.

The tackling has been improved as well. You now have the same ‘speed burst’ button found on the PlayStation version of the game, which lets you overtake the player with the ball. Up close, the same button acts as a ‘steal’ tackle, poking your foot out to nick the ball in a non-confrontational manner; further away, you can still slide tackle by using the other button. Combine a speed burst with a slide tackle, of course, and you’ll be flying studs-first through the air like a jet-propelled Ray Parlour. Seconds later, you’ll be off for an early dip in the communal bath, and your opponent’s Achilles tendons will have twanged into the crowd and taken some poor punter’s eye out.



(Above) All the squads have been updated, and if you’re on-line you’ll even be able to download each squad the day it’s announced throughout the tournament.



(Below) All the player stats have been refined so it should be a lot easier to compare players and select your squad.

PLAYER STATS

Frank DE BOER

AGE: 26

CLUB: Ajax Amsterdam (Hol)

INTERNATIONAL CAPS: 29

INTERNATIONAL GOALS: 1

POSITION: DEFENDER

SPEED 1

TACKLING 9

PASSING 9

SHOOTING 8

SKILL 9

FITNESS 99

PLAYER ONE

Frank DE BOER

COUNTRY: HOLLAND

CONTROL: JOYSTICK ONE

GK	1	F. Barthez
DF	2	J. Angloma
DF	3	E. Di Meco
DF	4	C. Karembeu
DF	5	L. Blanc
PZ	6	B. Zibanes
MD	7	D. Ginola
MD	8	D. Deschamps
MD	9	E. Cantona
FD	10	J-P. Papin
FD	11	Z. Zidane
—	12	AUTO PLAYER

PLAYER TWO

GK	1	F. Barthez
DF	2	J. Angloma
DF	3	E. Di Meco
DF	4	B. Zibanes
DF	5	L. Blanc
MD	6	V. Guerin
MD	7	D. Ginola
MD	8	D. Deschamps
MD	9	E. Cantona
FD	10	J-P. Papin
FD	11	Z. Zidane
—	12	AUTO PLAYER

PLAYER SET-UP

PLAYER ONE

Frank DE BOER

COUNTRY: HOLLAND

CONTROL: JOYSTICK ONE

PLAYER TWO

Frank DE BOER

COUNTRY: HOLLAND

CONTROL: JOYSTICK ONE

Drop me a line

The free-kick routine in the original Actua was a bit lacking on the user-friendly front (basically, you lobbed it hopefully down-field) so there’s a new feature for all dead-ball situations – lifted, if that’s not too harsh a word, from another popular football game.

FULL TIME RESULTS

TURKEY		CROATIA	
15	SHOTS	18	
6	SHOTS ON TARGET	9	
45%	POSSESSION	55%	
3	BOOKINGS	1	
1	SENDING OFFS	0	
1	GOALS	3	

To put it simply, there’s a dotted line showing the path the ball will actually take which you use to aim your kick; if the weather’s a bit windy, the line will wave about a bit. The further apart the dots are, the harder you’ll kick the ball. You increase the power by taking a longer run-up, pull back to raise the flight of the ball, and so on.

A similar system is also now used for penalties, except the ball path indicator moves from side to side until you press the fire button. A bit of a giveaway in a two-player game, you may think – and you may well be right. Gremlin reckon that the aftertouch facility means that the goalkeeper won’t necessarily know where the ball’s going... but I guess we will just have to wait and see just how true that is, won’t we?

VENUE SELECT

Stadia Gaga

All the real venues for Euro '96 will be featured in the game. In other words, if you want to play through a particular grouping of teams (and you choose to play it properly with the default settings), you’ll be playing at all the big wondergrounds of England: Old Trafford, St James’ Park, Gresty Road – they’re all there. If the teams play there in the real thing, you’ll play there too. (But you won’t have to spend hours sitting on a bus, playing cards and listening to Luther Vandross beforehand.)

To make sure anal retentive types don’t start ringing up complaining that there’s a 17-degree slope on the roof, not 19, Gremlin have had 3D wireframe models of every stadium made up by an ex-architectural draughtsman. Then they’ve coloured them all in properly with crayons and stuff so that they look just like the real thing. So don’t start moaning that the ladies’ bog doesn’t have a condom machine (or, for that matter, a roof or doors) in real life. If it’s got one in this, it’s there in the real thing, alright?

When you’re selecting the stadium to play in, you’ll see a little spinny-roundy version of each one. As if that wasn’t more than enough in the architectural authenticity stakes, you actually play the game in the very same model of the stadium. (Only bigger, obviously, or you wouldn’t fit all the players in.) If you’re a regular at the stadium in question, of course, this means you’ll be able to pause the game, move the cameras about, and point out exactly where you normally sit... over and over and over again, until your friends countersink your nose with a toffee hammer to get you to shut up. Frankly, this shits on the head of EA’s so-called Virtual Stadium technology – then rubs it in with its own school jumper. (By the way, don’t be surprised if you hear a bit of background grumbling at Wembley – that’ll be the poor sods in the crowd with the restricted views and the river of piss running beneath their seats. Ah, the home of football... you know it’s respected and admired the world over, don’t you?)

Team talk

Every team in the game has been totally re-graded, with players rated individually according to how they relate to everyone else in the tournament. Previously, they were worked out in a different way, (but don't ask me how or why). Their stats have been simplified, too, with certain ratings now acting as a sort of combined rating of other stats. As you progress through a tournament, they may become tired or injured, and their ratings will alter accordingly. Thus you will see power bars showing both their potential ratings and their actual ratings at the time. Russell Grant says: "An element of management and strategy will enter into your thinking at this point, unless you're completely stupid. Rest that tiring player. Rest him, luvvie. And stay out of the house on the 12th, to avoid an accident with hot chip-fat."

The thing about the team side of things is that nobody knows exactly who's going to be in everybody's final squad yet. And each team can only have 20 players. So Gremlin have attempted to cover themselves by providing stats and commentary for 40 players per team, trying to take into account anyone who may be on the fringes of selection, and even those who many think should be selected, but almost certainly won't be. Yes, Gianluca Vialli and Matthew Le Tissier are both in there.

The wonderful, fab, gorgeous and spiritually uplifting thing is that when it comes down to the tournament itself, Gremlin will be setting up a Website with all the national squads on it: as soon as the teams are announced for a particular game, you'll be able to download the players for your own game. And they're planning to make



(Below right) All the venues have been measured and accurate 3D models have been created following the exact pitch dimensions. Wembley looks particularly top.

GAME DRAW

London
Birmingham

ENGLAND
BULGARIA
PORTUGAL
HOLLAND

Sheffield
Nottingham

DENMARK
ROMANIA
RUSSIA
SWITZERLAND

Manchester
Liverpool

SPAIN
SCOTLAND
ITALY
TURKEY

Leeds
Newcastle

GERMANY
FRANCE
CZECH. REP.
CROATIA



Barry Davies

Barry Davies is a patient man. He actually sat down and said the name of every player in every squad of Gremlin's 'possibles' for Euro '96 three times, in tones of rising excitement. There are around 40 players in each 'possibles' squad, and 16 squads. That's over 600 players, three times each, which is less than there were in the 44-team original *Actua*, but still a hell of a lot. He also recited scores for games covering every possibility from 0-0 up to 7-5, along with accompanying summarising comments. And he knew more about the teams, off the top of his head, than the people whose job it was to research them for the game. Truly, this man is the son of God.

Over 30,000 words of commentary have been sampled for the new game, among them such mid-game corkers as, "If you're in late from work, I can tell you that the score is 3-1..." and loads of stuff for penalty shoot-outs, including, "He now gets the chance to make a name for himself - but *who* would be in his boots?"

TEAM SET-UP

HOLLAND



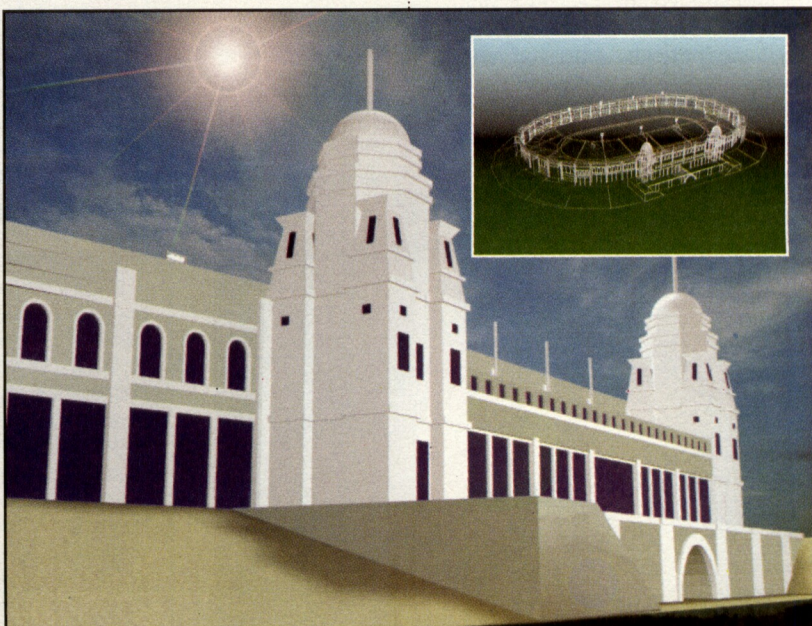
5-2-3

GK	1	E. Van Der Sar
DF	2	M. Reizinger
DF	3	A. Numan
DF	4	D. Blind
DF	5	F. De Boer
DF	6	R. Witschge
MD	7	C. Seedorf
MD	8	M. Overmars
FD	9	D. Bergkamp
FD	10	R. De Boer
FD	11	G. Helder
SB	12	E. De Goeij
SB	13	B. Roy
SB	14	P. Kluivert
SB	15	E. Davids
--	16	A. Winter
--	17	U. Van Gobbel
--	18	G. Taument
--	19	W. Bogarde
--	20	S. Valckx

more formations available at the same time. You'll be able to play through the tournament with the right team for every single match. Cool.

There's such a lot of other stuff that has been done to the thing, going from fairly basic stuff like graphical redesigns based on the proper Euro '96 fonts and emblems, to complex network facilities

and the option to play the whole game as one player, that there isn't room to go into it here. So you'll have to wait until we go through it all in the review - that is, if we're not all down the local pub watching the real thing. Just one thing: they still haven't put the team selection screen in alphabetical order. Get it right, chaps, eh? **Z**



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Kent's Out List

Vikings! Pirates Of The North

Ethelred, Eric, Hagar The Horrible and Kirk Douglas – they've all boarded a long boat in their time. **Rob Tribe** joins the Viking hall of fame and prepares to set sail.



(Above) Another day, another village – just click on the torch icon to teach them a lesson.

(Above right) Time to choose your sex. Remember looks are everything in the Viking world, and the current fashion is hessian and hats.

YOU CAN TELL BY THE EXCLAMATION mark after the word 'Viking' that this is going to be a hard-hitting game. That's what being a 'Viking(!)' was all about, wasn't it? You got up, pillaged for breakfast, raped for lunch and raised great citadels to the ground for dinner. But no. Apparently, being a Viking is a lot more taxing than you ever imagined. You have to start with deciding whether to be male or female (were there female Vikings? Or were they just wenches?), whether to be Swedish, Norwegian or Danish and then you have to pick a name, or go with the ever popular Sven or Aesa. Anybody with imagination in the name choosing department will be severely hindered by the lack of space available – for instance 'Ozric the son Ollgaf burner of huts and fiddler with horses' is definitely out.

After making all these life-changing decisions and picking a skill from

anything as mundane as diplomacy to the more exciting archery, you get the shock of your life – you find out your village's leader has just been killed in a blood-fest and his death has left you in charge.

There's a tavern in the town

Before you have even a chance to burn anything down in frustration you're obliged to attend meetings and deal with a variety of village problems, such as the spread of anthrax, a spate of maniacal sheep-shaving or what type of scary head to stick on the front of your boat – you know the sort of thing. Then you get to promote people to generals, if you so wish – or deal with more village problems (apparently the women's knitting circle is getting out of hand). At any time during this you can decide to mount an expedition to seek out some people to conquer, but why on earth should you bother when you can still look for trouble at the market place and the tavern?

Ahhh, the tavern, home of ale and wenches, but while here you may glean that important piece of information to

Product details

Developer: Random Games

Publisher: GT Interactive

Telephone: 0171-258 3791

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: May

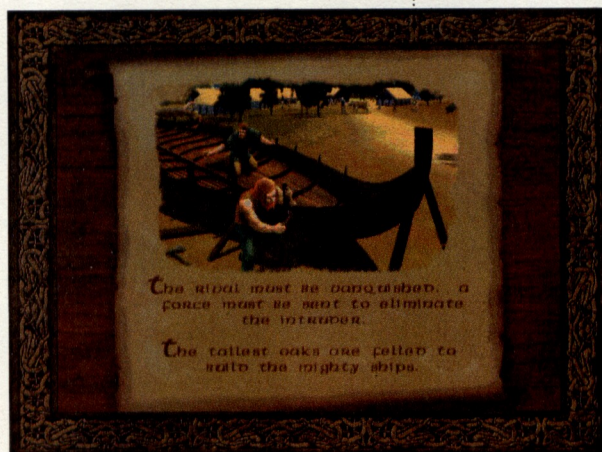
help you to win a battle with a neighbouring horde. Time to gather your crew and set sail.

And so off-a-fighting you will go, and on the way you'll meet other pirates who'll want to fight you with an assorted array of weaponry. When they're dealt with it's time to find a city; there you can drink at the local tavern, flirt with women and buy useful stuff at their market, with the advantage that you can burn their village to the ground before you leave to make your next conquest. The more conquests you make, the better things are for you, but be prepared to prove yourself more than once. Death and Valhalla awaits; so onwards my horny-hat wearing friends. **Z**



(Right) Popping down to the Boat Show to pick up a yacht is not an option. Pillaging costs, and right here is where you start paying – in sweat (although a hammer and nails is probably a better option).

(Far right) Check your maps, synchronise your sundials and you're off.



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The Pandora

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The dense fauna of the Amazonian jungle. Is this one of **Charlie Brooker's** sexual fantasies? Yes. But it's also the sequel to the classic *Under A Killing Moon*. Get your drooling gear round this...

I BRING YOU GLAD TIDINGS. REMEMBER *Under A Killing Moon*? If you're not familiar with it, or if you didn't like it, then shame on you. I thought it was fantastic: a thoroughly entertaining mixture of 3D exploration, point-and-click adventuring, and (brace yourselves) 'interactive movie'.

The player had to guide private detective Tex Murphy through a series of trials and tribulations revolving around some kind of murderous cult. Strong on gameplay (I couldn't drag myself away until I'd completed it), it also featured a genuinely amusing script. Okay, so the

plot didn't exactly flow that smoothly, but hey! The dialogue! Tex managed to drawl a smart-ass comment about just about everything he came across. Some of his insulting, sarcastic replies during the conversation sequences really did make me laugh out loud. No, really.

Anyway, I suppose I'd better staple my sides shut in case they burst again during *The Pandora Directive* which, in case you haven't guessed, is the sequel to *Killing Moon*. And based on the current evidence, it looks like being a reassuring example of Bigger! Better! Faster! More!

The Tex Files

This latest exploit finds Tex investigating some devious jiggery-pokery involving the famous 'Roswell Incident' of 1947. Legend has it that in that year a bona fide UFO crash-landed in New Mexico, catching the US Air Force unawares. Early news reports of the time quoted a USAF spokesman saying that the wreckage of an alien spacecraft had been recovered (cue the sounds of jaws dropping worldwide). A few days later and, hey whaddya know? The military guys changed their story. "Shucks," they said, "we were mistaken. It was only a weather balloon." Yeah? Chinny reckon.

And if all that isn't enough to set any Forteanos out there drooling by the gallon, the storyline also manages to wrap itself around another thorny

Product details

Developer: Access

Publisher: Virgin

Telephone: 0171-368 2255

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: May

mystery – the strange disappearance of the ancient Mayan civilisation who, if I remember correctly, are rumoured to have been *suspiciously* technically advanced (judging by all the archaeological evidence available) for their time. Blimey. Whatever next? Telekinetic Bigfoots walking through walls?

Access have also provided a lot more variety en route to the final solution, by including three different 'paths' to the story, and a whopping *seven* completely different endings. Which path leads you to which ending is, naturally, dependent upon which decisions you make during the game. Soooo... technically speaking, you could go back and play the game seven times over. Well, that's probably what they'll print on the back of the box at any rate.

All's well that Roswell

If you've never read one of our Blueprints before, you won't experience a dizzying sense of *déjà vu* when I tell you that this sequel contains a great many technical improvements over its predecessor. The entire interface has been considerably jazzed up, leaving the whole looking even more polished than it did before.

The movie segments have been given a good hard jazzing, too. First, there's a proper movie director at the helm (er... who was also responsible for the pilot episode of *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers*), and second, the cast includes a few more recognisable faces: Tanya Roberts (former *Charlie's Angel* and *View To A Kill* Bond Girl), Barry Corbin (of *Northern Exposure* fame), Kevin McCarthy (star of the fabulous original version of *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers*), and John Agar. Eh? Hang on a minute... John who?

(Below) "Don't shoot! My jokes aren't that bad!"



Directive



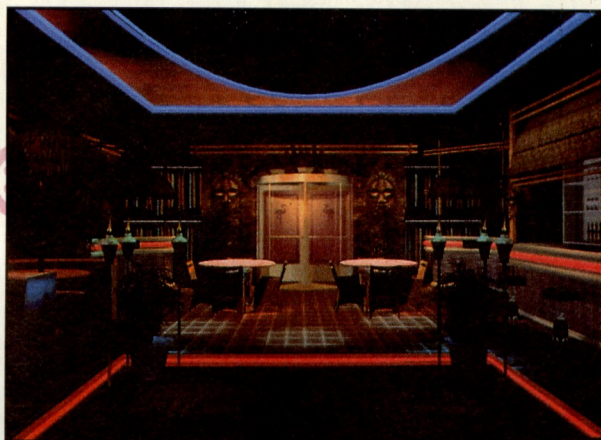
John Agar, you idiot. Star of some of the most gloriously dunderheaded 1950's Z-grade sci-fi movies of all time (including *The Amazing Colossal Man*). Hoorah. The one thing that I felt let it down was that the all-too familiar 'blue outline' effect (that plagues every single chroma-key production in existence) is still in evidence here. Hey, but whaddya want? Perfection?

The basic structure of the game is still about the same. Tex has a startlingly detailed 'Virtual World' to explore in the familiar *Doom* style – all of it real-time 3D (no pre-rendered 'pseudo movement' here, folks). As in any adventure, there's a vast array of objects to fiddle about with and collect. If you strike up a conversation with any of the various characters you meet the action switches to FMV-based 'movie' bits, in which you get to choose what sort of conversational tone Tex should adopt throughout the sequence. As in the previous game, the vast majority of his replies are bluntly sarcastic, or wincingly insensitive, which adds to the laughs no end.

Puzzles come in many forms – aside from the overtly *The 7th Guest*-style ones (which somehow never came across as annoying in the first Tex title), further obstacles include choosing the right choice of words during the 'talkie' segments, to finding small scraps of paper stuck on the underside of desks, etc, during the 'movement' bits. Oh – and if you really hate *The 7th Guest*-type puzzles, don't worry, as there are two modes of play, one of which allows you to bypass those bits completely.

Potential fun overload

Hopefully, *The Pandora Directive* should be even more fun than the original game – which could very possibly result in a dangerous 'total fun overload' situation, during which your entire body could swell to treble its normal size, spin around in the air, emit a high-pitched whine, and then explode. Or something like that. Who knows? For the meantime at least, you may sleep soundly in your



(Above) This looks similar to *The 7th Guest* but without the bloody irritating eyeballs.

(Left) The designer working on the sequel to the sequel...

(Right) A Joan Collins lookalike...



Pods, safe in the knowledge that as soon as we can get our ham-sized fists on a finished copy, we'll play it for ages and ages and then tell you about it, using an incredibly cunning combination of 'words', and 'pictures', printed upon 'paper', collectively referred to as a 'full review'. And here endeth my entry into the 1996 'Most Pointless and Padded Final Paragraph' Championship Cup. Here's hoping I come first. Fingers crossed. Touch wood. Cake. Visit your sick grandmother. Mares eat oats and Does eat oats, and little lambs eat Ivy. *Donkey Kong Junior*. Superkalifradgilistic-expealidocious. Ping. Pong. Poo. **Z**

(Below and inset) You don't need us to tell you how good it's looking...



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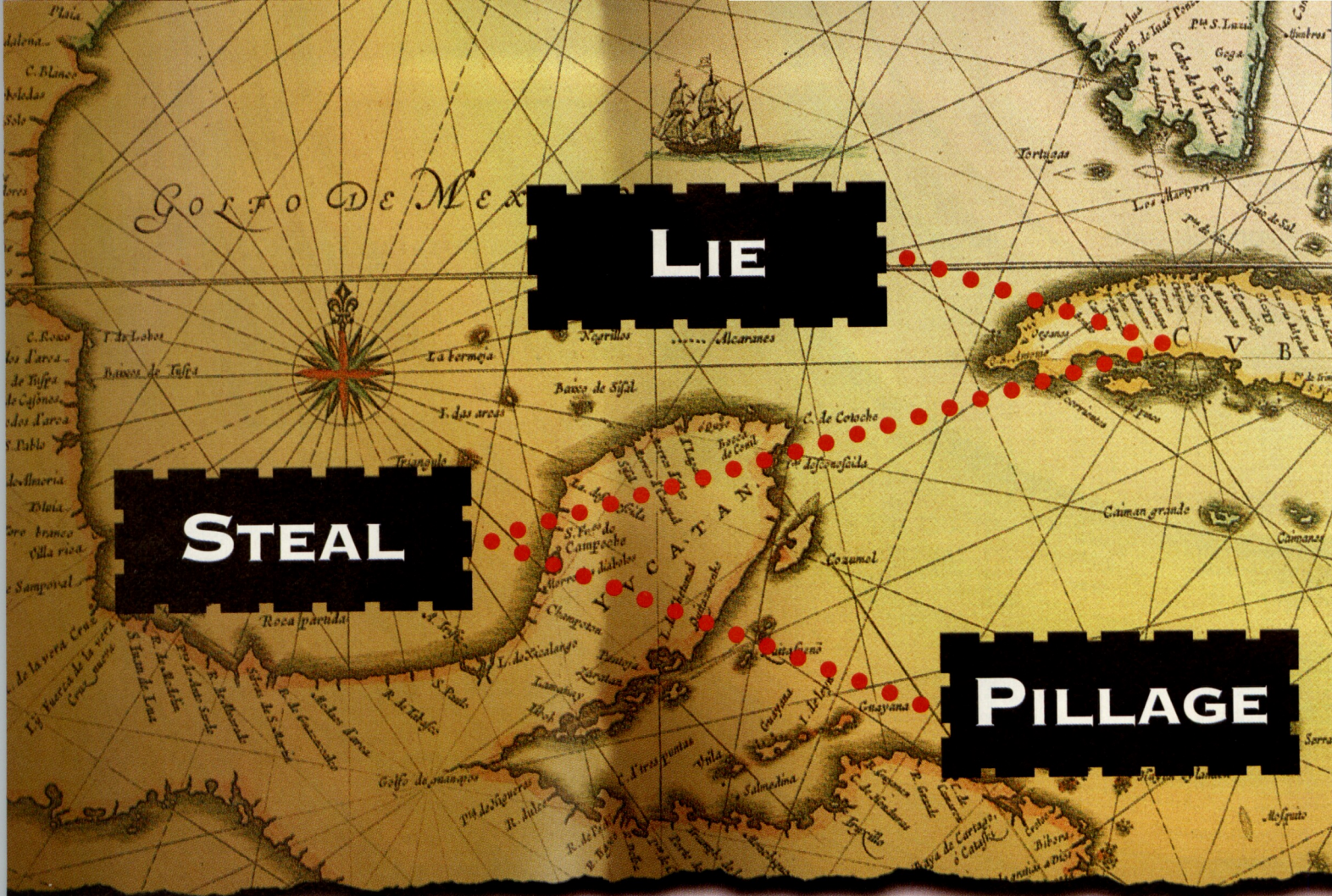
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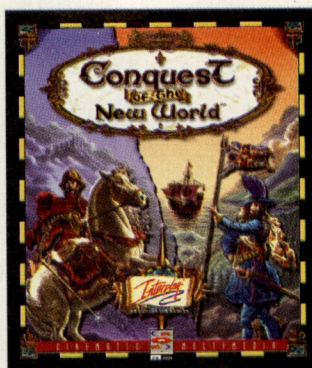
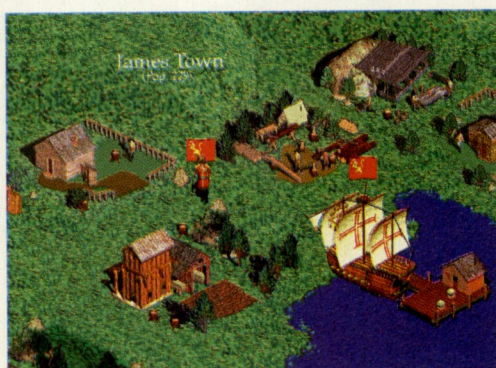
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should watch
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PC Format - Feb '96

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Product details

Developer: Bullfrog

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Telephone: 01753 549442

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: Autumn



DON'T YOU JUST LOVE HOSPITALS? The antiseptic corridors. The hushed air of underplayed tension, punctuated only by the strained moans of the dying. The eerily unsettling, brightly coloured murals of Mister Men characters drawn by local school children. That funny smell that's sort of like an OAP's carpet, with milk of magnesia spilt all over it.

My own experience with hospitals is limited to a weird affliction I got in my early teenage years. Suddenly rendered

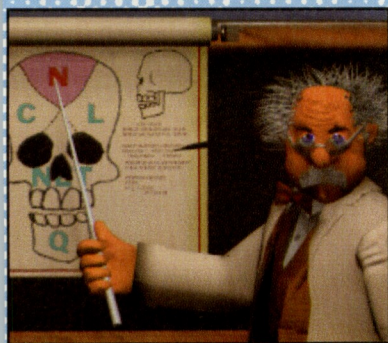
an invalid, I was subjected to all manner of X-rays, ultrasound scans, medicines – even heavy weights dangling off the end of my (temporarily crippled) leg. Being too self-conscious to use the plastic 'poo potty' provided for my bowel movements, and being unable to get out of the bed on my own, I went without a crap for six days until they gave me a wheelchair. Unfortunately, by then one of my arms was knackered as well, leaving me unable to move the chair in a straight line. You should have seen the number of loops I span that chair through trying to make it to the bogs.

With memories like that, I suppose something like *Theme Hospital* should have me

breaking out in a cold sweat. Fortunately, all my limbs work properly these days, and besides, it looks like it could be

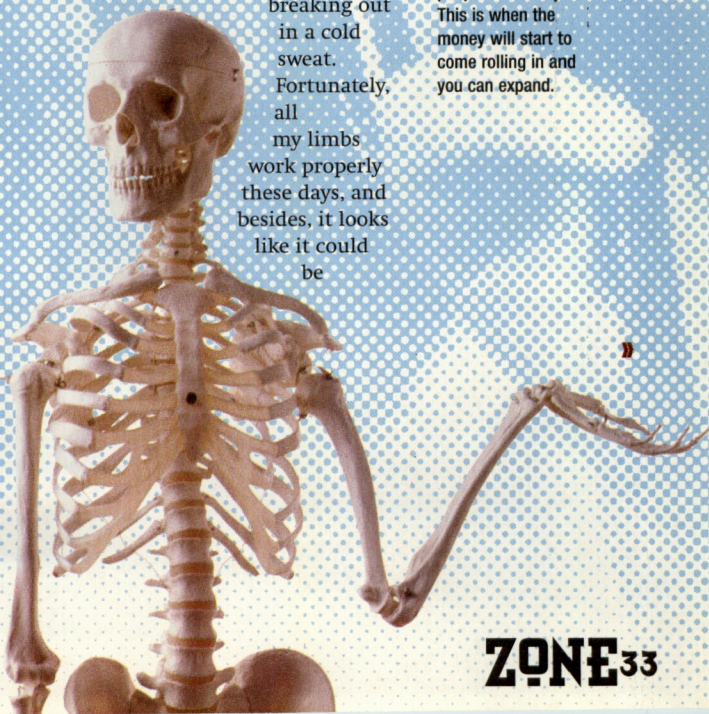
(Above left) Unlike *Theme Park*, *Theme Hospital* is all in glorious SVGA, which means oodles of detailed characters to ogle at.

(Left) You'll start with limited funds and a small practice which you can extend as (or if) you become successful. Once you've got some cash together treating in-growing toe nails you'll be able to invest in some decent equipment and treat people with hairyitis. This is when the money will start to come rolling in and you can expand.



That was then, this is now

Originally, *Theme Hospital* was going to feature three different 'time zones' – ie the game would start in medieval times (when curing people usually meant hacking their legs off with a bloody great saw, covered in leeches), work its way through the Victorian era (lots of mucking about with electric shocks and the like), before finally making it to the present day and beyond. Sadly, the sheer amount of different graphics required to pull that off has proved prohibitive. It now seems likely that the different 'time zone' bits will see the light of day in some other form – either as add-on disks (cue much brow-furrowing and disapproving tut-tuts), or as fully-fledged sequels (cue a little less brow-furrowing, and a few mumbles of 'fair enough I suppose'). Rest assured, there should be more than enough for the player to contend with in any one time zone to make this seem like too much of a blow. So don't whinge, okay?



« (Right) *Theme Hospital* uses a very sophisticated AI (similar to that used in *Dungeon Keeper*) which ensures that all the characters behave just like real people (in other words they'll get lost if you don't have enough signs up in your hospital).

(Below right) At the end of the day *Theme Hospital* isn't just about making people feel better, it's a business. If you don't get enough cash coming in you won't be able to develop new treatments and other hospitals will steal your patients. On the other hand, if you're too successful you'll run out of patients and your cash flow will dry up.

last month (which took me ages to write, you bastard), you may not be aware of exactly what it is. So I'll tell you.

X-rayed

Theme Hospital is the second entry in Bullfrog's 'Designer' series of games. *Theme Park* was the first, and we all know how successful that was. But a 'Theme' game about the medical profession... now that's a different kettle of fish. Isn't it? After all, a theme park's all about making money. Surely a hospital's mainly concerned with curing the afflicted?

Well, yes and no. Your main objective is to cure as many sickies as possible, but to do that you'll need to keep your coffers full. Those brain scanning machines don't come cheap, and they hardly ever show up in car boot sales. You'll have to be pretty shit-hot on the resource management side of things or else it's ward-closing time. And with closed wards comes a mounting pile of corpses – not the sort of outcome you're looking for (unless you're particularly cold and callous). Aside from juggling the everyday finances, you'll also need some adequate staff – you can go for the cheap, crappy ones (who couldn't successfully diagnose a decapitation) to the expensive, super-intelligent ones (who can cure brain cancer with a length of twine, a teaspoon, and half a bottle of Ambre Solaire).

As for the patients themselves, their ailments aren't exactly conventional. This being a computer game, Bullfrog have free rein to knock up as many ludicrous diseases as possible. And that's exactly what they've done. From viruses that cause the victim's tongue to quadruple in size, to psychological disorders which convince the sufferer that they are Elvis Presley, it's not the kind of thing they'd be able to cope with down at Holby Casualty. Furthermore, outlandish problems require outlandish solutions, so your research and development boys are

going to have to invent some seriously un-hinged potions and gadgets in order to put a stop to the symptoms. If you're not careful, you could end up making matters worse with your supposed



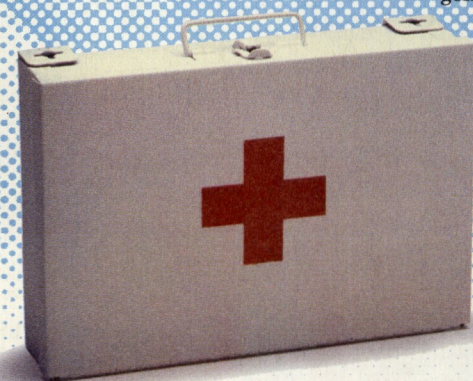
'cures'... but then without a little 'experimentation' you're not going to get very far. Decisions, decisions...

Back to the suture

Your job doesn't end there. Heaven forbid. You've got to design the layout of the hospital – from the teeniest toilet to the largest operating theatre – and make sure it all functions correctly. Competition from neighbouring hospitals comes into play too – after all, you don't want them pinching your staff or patients. You can even link up with a couple of mates and have a multi-player game in which you all compete against each other – sneakier tactics include sending infected patients into a rival hospital in order to spread germs all over the place.

As you can see from these screenshots, it's all looking rather splendid. The graphics are crisp and highly-detailed, and the animation is superb. There's a potential cast of over 1000 different characters, too, courtesy of the 'snap-together' mix 'n' match qualities of the

sprites themselves. They've all got their own 'personalities' as well – an updated version of the *Theme Park* engine (which decided who was happy, sad, undecided, tired, stupid, etc etc) sees to that very nicely, thank you. All in all, it looks like it could repeat the success of *Theme Park* with ease. It's a lot more advanced, it's got far better graphics, greater longevity, and an even sicker sense of humour. Add that to the multi-player options and it starts looking like a sure-fire winner. Don your surgical masks for the full review in a forthcoming issue. Z



Normal *adj.*

1. Usual, regular, common, typical: *the normal way of doing it*, the normal level.
2. constituting a standard: *if we take this as normal*.
3. *Psychol.* a. being within certain limits of intelligence, educational success or ability, etc. b. conforming to the conventions of one's group.



Contents

04

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT THEN?

What's all the fuss about eh? Take a brief peak into the world of *Normality* and discover what the whole thing is wobbling on about.

06

NORMAL PEOPLE

A brief chat with the guys behind *Normality*... what the bloody hell were they on when they thought all of this up?

10

OUT OF THE ORDINARY

Normality boasts a number of unique features that haven't been seen in a game of this type before. How do they do that?

12

NEUTROPOLIS

Take a tour of the city-state in which the game takes place.

14

CHARACTER ASSASSINATION

Normality is filled to overflowing with weird and wonderful characters... come and meet the people that make a difference.

CREDITS

Words, Pics, Research & Stuff: John Davison

Design: Jason Simmons

Thanks to: Steve McKevitt, Mark Mattocks, Ade Carless, Pat Phelan and everyone at Gremlin Interactive plus everyone at PC Zone

Normality is the latest game from one of the UK's longest running software houses, Gremlin Interactive, and despite its title it is an extraordinary game that should put the willies up anyone used to the more traditional form of adventure game. It is a unique blend of technologies that makes it truly a product for the 90s. Combining state of the art 3D technology, hi-res full motion video footage and motion-captured animation with traditional point-and-click adventure style gameplay, it is a game that could well define a whole new genre of gaming on the PC.

The following pages will take you through the game, pointing out all of the unique and fancy-pants clever bits along the way, before introducing you to some of the main characters in the story. Hopefully by the time you've finished reading this you'll have a pretty good idea of what it's all about... we hope. **N**

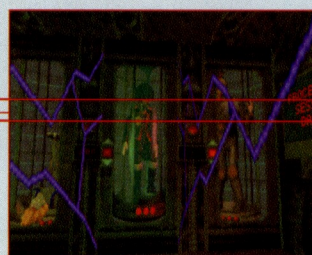
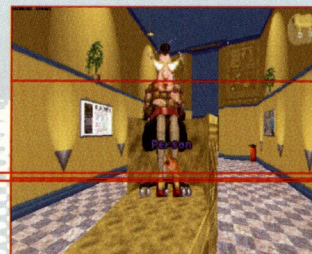
Don't

be

Normal,

get

Normality



Normality will be available in the shops by the end of March 1996.

Available on PC CD-ROM

Gremlin Interactive Ltd
2-4 Carver Street
Sheffield
S1 4FS

Tel: 0114 275 3423
Fax: 0114 276 8581



"Normality is a vast game that differs from many in the amount of freedom



WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT

The point-and-click adventure comes of age with Gremlin's new adventure, but what is this amazing new game actually about?

Point-and-click adventures are funny old things. They're one of the few genres of games that have consistently grown along with PC technology. Back in the days of yore, when 'state-of-the-art' meant 16-colour graphics and 'gasp' 'mouse compatibility' point-and-clickers were without a doubt the most popular genre of game on the PC. Over the past few years, the graphics have improved, the sound has become increasingly realistic and the gameplay has become more complex... but despite all of this the basic principal has stayed pretty much the same - 2D graphics with limited freedom, rich storylines and lots of puzzles. Loads of games developers have proved that they're pretty good at it... Lots of games have been released that are all fundamentally the same... And it's all starting to get considerably yawny-yawny to be

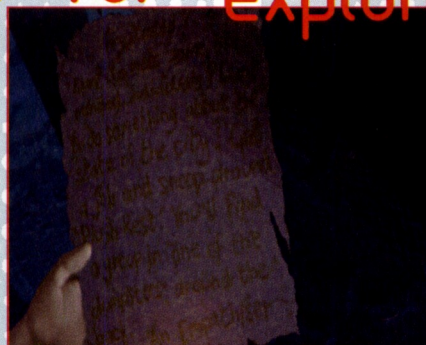
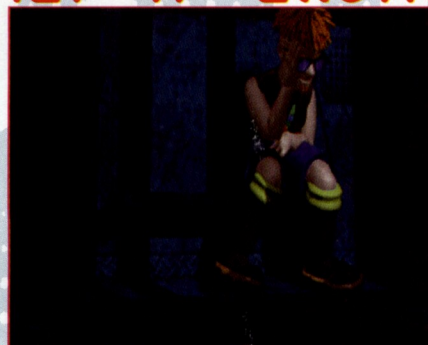
perfectly honest. Sorry... but it is.

Since the arrival of games like *Doom* though, these old-style adventures have taken a bit of a kicking in the old popularity department. 3D is 'in' and nothing seems to be able to challenge this.

Normality from Gremlin Interactive is one of the first games to come along and give this whole concept a punch in the nads though. By combining the depth and complexity of a point-and-clicker with the er, 3D-ness (you'll notice that the words 'Virtual' and 'Reality' won't appear together in this little book as it does tend to make a game sound a bit wanky) of modern games, the team have put together a style of game that is vastly different to anything that we've seen before.

Normality is a vast game that differs from many other adventure games in the amount of freedom that it allows for

other adventure games
that it allows for exploration."



AL SOUT' THEN?

exploration. The playing area is divided into a number of distinct sections, but each of these are vast and can be explored as thoroughly as the player wishes.

Before we take a look at all of the techy bits and features that the game has to offer, this first little bit can be put to good use by describing the story behind the game...

1984 MEETS BRAZIL... OR SOMETHING

The guys at Gremlin Interactive have described *Normality* as a bit like "1984 only funnier". In their own words, this is a "pretty bad" way of describing the thing, but it sort of sums it up quite nicely.

Set in an undetermined year, but quite obviously in the near future, the story all takes place in a city-state known as Neutropolis - a place where boredom reigns supreme and the pollution is so terrible that no-one even knows what the sun or

the sky are... let alone actually remembering what they look like.

This city-state is ruled over by an evil dictator called Paul Nystalux. Paul is something of a fascist-bastard and is attempting to completely control the populace by suppressing all feelings of imagination and creativity with the aid of strange 'mood altering' gizmos. These gizmos are installed in all kinds of consumer goods (although furniture crops up a lot in the game) and along with extremely boring BBC2 style tv scheduling and Jimmy Young/Terry Wogan style radio programming the people of Neutropolis are gradually sliding towards a total state of boredom.

Your role in all of this is as Kent - a young, disaffected twenty-something whose primary purpose is to step in and shake everything up. The game begins with Kent being arrested by the Norm Police and thrown into

prison where they attempt to 'Normalize' him by piping elevator music into his cell 24 hours a day.

When the Norms are satisfied that Kent has been sufficiently indoctrinated they release him back into society and lock him in his flat. Whilst here, he is kept under observation for crimes against Normality and has a Norm Trooper posted outside his flat listening out to make sure he is watching tv and absorbing the boredom.

As you can probably guess, Kent has no choice but to try and escape, and... as luck would have it, whilst he was in prison he is sent a note by an empathiser informing him of a resistance movement against the Norms.

Right... now then, this is where it all starts to get a bit complicated so stay awake. The resistance movement is lead by Paul Nystalux's twin brother Saul who is the complete opposite of

his sibling. Coming across as a sort of completely mellow, spaced-out surf dude type Saul is totally opposed to the fascist regime that his brother is imposing. Unfortunately though, Paul is aware of dissension in the ranks and has captured Saul and imprisoned him in a vast prison complex known as the Ordinary Outpost. Here he is subjected to a particularly vicious 'mood magnet' that is gradually eroding his personality.

As you join the resistance you soon learn that the only way to ensure victory is to not only instigate a number of 'abnormal' occurrences in the city, but also to rescue Saul and finally defeat Paul once and for all.

The adventure will take Kent all over Neutropolis and will introduce him to a wide variety of characters and concepts as well as showing the player all kinds of graphical effects and clever bits of programming. **N**

"We just figured that everyone
so if you're going to do
you might

Gremlin Interactive has had a large team working on the game for some time now. Aside from all of the programmers, musicians, graphic artists and testers there are two people who can claim the project as their 'baby'.

Any project of this size has a pretty big team behind it, and like any team it needs its visionaries. Ade Carless and Pat Phelan have both guided *Normality* throughout its development and have worked in both production and creative areas.

John Davison: you're both credited as being the 'creative' types at Gremlin Interactive, but what exactly have your roles on *Normality* been and when did you get involved?

Ade Carless: I've been involved with the *Normality* project right from the beginning and I've worked in a creative role as well as being the producer and writer on the project... so er, yeah - right from the start.

Pat Phelan: I got pretty much involved right at the beginning and I got roped in as the 'Creative Manager'... I think that's what it has me down as on the credits.

JD: So what does this mean exactly?

Pat: The majority of the work I've done has been more to do with the sound in the game and in the animations. The GDVs or 'Gremlin Digital Videos' (to give

'em their full name) have lots of flash stuff in them graphically and we wanted the sound effects and music to work just as well. A lot of my work concentrated on doing this... which meant I had

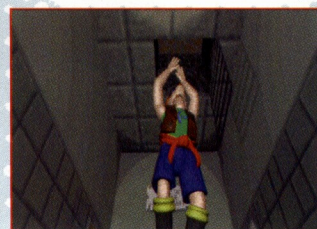
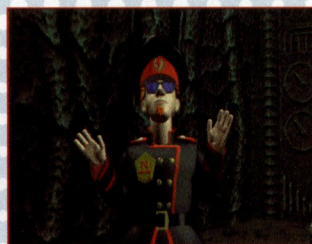
to sit around getting bored for hours sifting through bloody sound effects CDs trying to find exactly the right sound effect for a certain bit of the game. It

can be pretty time consuming as something that only lasts a couple of seconds ends up being anything up to three hours work.

Ade: I basically wrote the story for the game and I came up with all



NORMALITY



loves the Lucas games, anything like this as well aim at the top"

of the original concepts for each of the characters. I didn't actually draw any of them, I just sat down and had a bit of a brainstorm before scrawling down a brief thumbnail description of each character. There were 25 of these in all and the descriptions went to the graphic artists who came up with sketches and then renderings of each person. It was very important that everyone agreed on the way that the characters looked though because we'd have quite a few artists working on the game and we needed them to all be pulling in the right direction.

JD: How did the story evolve? It's been tagged by many as a sort of 'funny' 1984. Was this what you had in mind?

Ade: No. Never even read it.

Pat: Hmm, that's something that's cropped up because no-one really knew how to describe it.

Ade: When we started the whole thing the project was actually very different and to be honest it's continued to evolve as we've worked our way along. It all began when Ian Stewart, the boss man at Gremlin, set down a brief for a game. What this basically was, was a sort of working real-time city environment that featured a sort of grungey, Generation-X type character - and that's where Kent sort of originated from. It all evolved from this very scant brief really.

We knew right from the beginning that it was going to be a point-and-click adventure and

the really early ideas had it being a far more basic game with a traditional 2D viewpoint. We just figured that everyone loves the Lucas games, so if you're going to do anything like this you might as well aim at the top. Everyone with a PC loves the *Monkey Islands* and the *Indy* games. We wanted to do something with the same kind of humour and style - something a bit surreal and wacky.

When everything began the game was going to be 2D and all of the graphics were going to be very grey and dull with cartoon-like characters over the top, but then we turned up with this new graphics engine and it was decided that we'd use that instead. To be honest I didn't think it would work at first, but the freedom of movement that

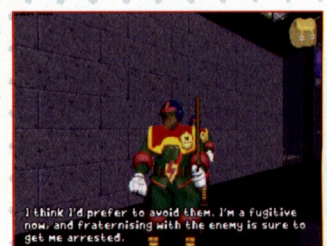
the True3D thing gives makes it totally different now. There's an awful lot of detail in there... far more than you could put in with a traditional point-and-click game.

Pat: It really has evolved a lot. In fact, the original drafts for both the game concept and the story were dropped. Ade's original script was shelved really early on because people here thought it

PEOPLE



Pat Phelan (left) and Ade Carless (er... right - obviously) are the two chaps responsible for dreaming this whole thing up. And, what a charming, dashing, and attractive pair they are too. Or something.



I think I'd prefer to avoid them. I'm a fugitive now, and fraternising with the enemy is sure to get me arrested.

"It is all very surreal but as we've shown it to more and more people do laugh at it, and that means that we've

► was too weird and too well... Ade really. It was just completely lacking so it got the push.

Ade: Yeah, but originally the game didn't even have a story.

Pat: Yeah, I suppose the original concept was just this weird, surreal puzzle thing... but as I said, everything has evolved quite a lot as we've moved along. The way the story is now, if you get into it I suppose you get used to the humour... you sort of get into Ade's karma really. It is all very surreal but as we've shown it to more and

more people we've been quite pleased... people do laugh at it, and that means that we've managed to do what we set out to.

Ade: A lot of the ideas for the story were just based on things that had been knocking around in my mind for years. Some of the stuff came from role playing games that I'd seen but the city itself, Neutropolis, that came from something I'd seen about a city in the States called Eureka that sits on the river Mad. I don't really know much about the places, but the names seem to sum things up perfectly.

As far as Paul Nystalux goes... well he was originally invented for our PlayStation game *Loaded*, but he never actually made it in.

When we brought him into *Normality* I wanted to have him as the bad guy and then have his twin brother as one of the good guys - that's where the Saul, Paul thing came from really.

Pat: What has happened throughout the development of *Normality* is pretty much that Ade dreams up all of these ideas and writes them down and then he hands them to me. What I do is read through them and then annoy the shit out of him by asking awkward questions about why certain things happen and why characters behave in certain ways. A lot of stuff got altered along the way... and in between different builds of the game we change things a lot.

Conversations tend to get fucked about with - especially the one at the beginning with Dai, that's changed loads of times. Things would always get a little out of hand and some people tended to get a bit surreal. I'm not sure how the whole thing eventually evolved into what it is though.

Ade: Oh... I always knew how it was going to end.

Pat: Yeah?

JD: How did the characters evolve? There are quite a lot of them - are any of them based on anyone in particular.

Pat: Well no, not really. Like we said, a lot of the characters just came from Ade's initial thumbnails, but to be honest the character development really took off when we got the voice actors in. These guys were really fantastic and they really made us rethink how some of the characters would behave. As soon as you hear someone's voice you get a far better idea of what they are like as a character. Although there are 25 characters in the game, we actually only

The complete *Normality* team, complete with amusing Ade Cartless voodoo doll. These chaps have all lived, eaten, drunk, programmed, drawn, played and probably farted together for a long time now.



more people we've been quite pleased...

managed to do what we set out to"

used three voice actors and they were all quite brilliant. There was this American guy who was great, he did Kent and a few other characters then there was a bloke and a girl who were absolutely fantastic. The way that professional voice actors work is amazing, they can just add so much to a character, especially if they start to ad-lib around some of the lines. Some of the best character development came when the actors just went off on one y'know? It may have screwed around with the scripts, but it made it far better in the end.

Ade: Things changed quite a lot on the characters front though.

Pat: Yeah, there were a lot of characters that got dropped from the original plan. Some were just redundant and other just didn't work so we eventually whittled it down to 25 with seven 'main' characters... the 'stars' if you like.

JD: So now that it's finished, are you happy with it? Are there any bits that you'd want to be put in or are there any bits that you missed out that you wished had been left in?

Pat: Oh god, there were loads of things that never made it into the final game. Like er... well there's nearly a swear word in the final scene. Ooh... nearly naughty there.

Ade: And there's the multi-player thing.

Pat: Oh yeah. The game was originally going to be a sort of multi-character effort where you would initially start off just controlling Kent, but as you met up with other characters like Heather and Dai, you'd be able to control them as well. A bit like the way you can move characters around in an RPG. This didn't actually make it in at the end because it was working out to be far too complicated. It would have been nice though. We had this great concept of you being able to control every core member of the resistance and

there'd be puzzles like er... yeah... moving one character onto a switch plate and then using another to open the door. You know, stuff like that. Looking back I'd like to have been able to carry on with that idea, but it would have changed the game completely.

JD: So now that this one is finished what are you going to do next? Is there going to be a follow up to *Normality*?

Pat: There's going to be quite a few games that use the True3D engine at Gremlin, and we're going to continue to tweak it

with each new release. There's already a very ambitious project going on called *Realms of the Haunting* which uses a development of True3D but mine and Ade's next project will be something like *Normality*. We may do something a bit more serious, I dunno.

Ade: Not a sequel though really.

Pat: No, now that we've worked with these character I'd rather just let 'em lie and get on with something else. We may end up doing a sequel - I suppose it depends how successful this one is. We will be working on an adventure though and I think that we'll incorporate the multi-character idea right from the start... we may even take it one stage further and make it a multi-player thing as well, I dunno. We'll see eh? **N**



Ade Carless quite clearly searching for inspiration through the consumption of... eugh, what is that he has in his mouth? He's obviously very photogenic... this is the best one we have of him.



As well as boasting a well developed plot and character base, *Normality* features a number of new technologies that set it apart from other adventure games. All of these technologies ensure that this is one of the most graphically advanced games in the genre.

OUT OF THE

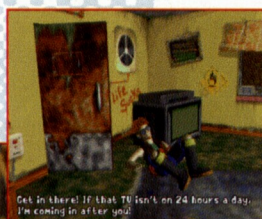
True 3D Engine Motion Captured Animation

The 'guts' of *Normality*. Basically this is the 3D graphics engine used throughout the game and it is a highly advanced system that runs in both VGA and SVGA. Based on an early CAD system developed by industry veteran Tony Crowther, the system used in *Normality* is far more advanced than something you would find in, say, *Doom*.

Each location is a fully texture-mapped environment, but unlike most other games using similar systems, all of the objects that you find are true 3D structures. If you look at the screen shots of the furniture in Kent's flat for example, you'll notice that all of the objects are 'proper' 3D things that you can look all around and behind. None of the cardboard-cut-out-o-vision that you get in game like *Doom*. As you'd expect from a modern 3D engine, True3D allows you the freedom to move just about anywhere within the

playing environment as well as looking both up and down. In fact, to encourage this, the game has been designed so that in many areas the player needs to investigate an environment that is believably three dimensional. A lot of the clues are to be found on both the floor and the ceiling.

Another unique feature of True3D is that it also allows for a combination of 3D objects and motion-captured animations that mimic real-life effects and forces such as inertia and gravity. Also (there's more... bloody hell) the system allows the programmers to place sound effects in specific locations in the room so that as the player walks about, the effect moves around the sonic soundscape accordingly. Clever or what?



One of the most advanced elements of the graphics in *Normality* is the fact that all of the animation for the characters in the video sequences has been fully motion-captured at Gremlin's studio in Sheffield. Motion capture is a relatively new system that has only recently been used in video games and Gremlin's studio is currently one of the most advanced in the UK... So what the hell is it?

Well, basically what it does is record movement and then store it away as a framework that other graphical effects can be mapped onto. By using a clever array of digital cameras linked to a PC movements of... well, just about anything, can be recorded thanks to a rather bizarre looking set up.

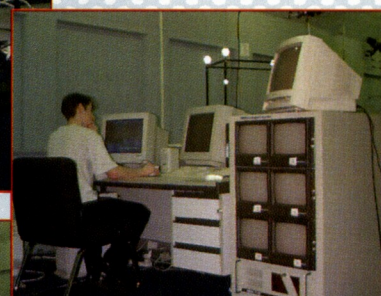
The way the cameras work is that they track the movement of small reflective balls that are attached to the moving joints of

whatever it is that is being recorded. In the case of *Normality*, these 'balls' were attached to the joints of actors as they moved around playing out the movements of the characters in the game. The result is an incredibly accurately animated 'stick man' that can be used as a basis for the animation in the game.

All of the cut-scenes in the game feature animations of this kind, and when you see the thing working it really is far more realistic than anything that you've seen before. Kent struts his way around, whilst the video of Brian Deluge as he thrashes around in his rock video really wouldn't have been possible using traditional SGI or 3D Studio animation techniques.

Gremlin has successfully used the system for a variety of projects already, the most notable of which is the incredible *Actua Soccer* which featured literally thousands of these motion captures for the different movements that the footballers made.

Future Gremlin Interactive products will all use this system as it introduces a new element of realism that is unsurpassed by any other system.



THE ORDINARY

Gremlin Digital The Videos Voodoo Doll

Linked with the motion captured stuff is the fancy new video compression system that Gremlin has developed for use in *Normality*. In all there are more than 100 different cut scenes in *Normality*, all of which are in hires and full screen. None of your tedious mini-windowed AVI files here. The new technique allows the animations to be streamed in seamlessly between the action

thus making the whole thing less 'jumpy' than other games featuring extensive cut-scenes.

It's worth noting here as well that to add to the seamless nature of the animations, all of the cut-scenes have been designed and rendered to look very similar to the in-game graphics. The result is something that looks far more like the player simply moving their viewpoint as opposed to a clumsy jump from obviously 3D engine generated graphics to super-duper 3D Studio generated rend-o-vision stuff.

All graphic adventures have their own unique control system - Lucas has SCUMM, Sierra has it's proprietary point-and-click engine... well, *Normality* has a unique system based around this thing... the voodoo doll.

By right-clicking the mouse on any active object in the game players can then effect it by clicking on various parts of the doll.

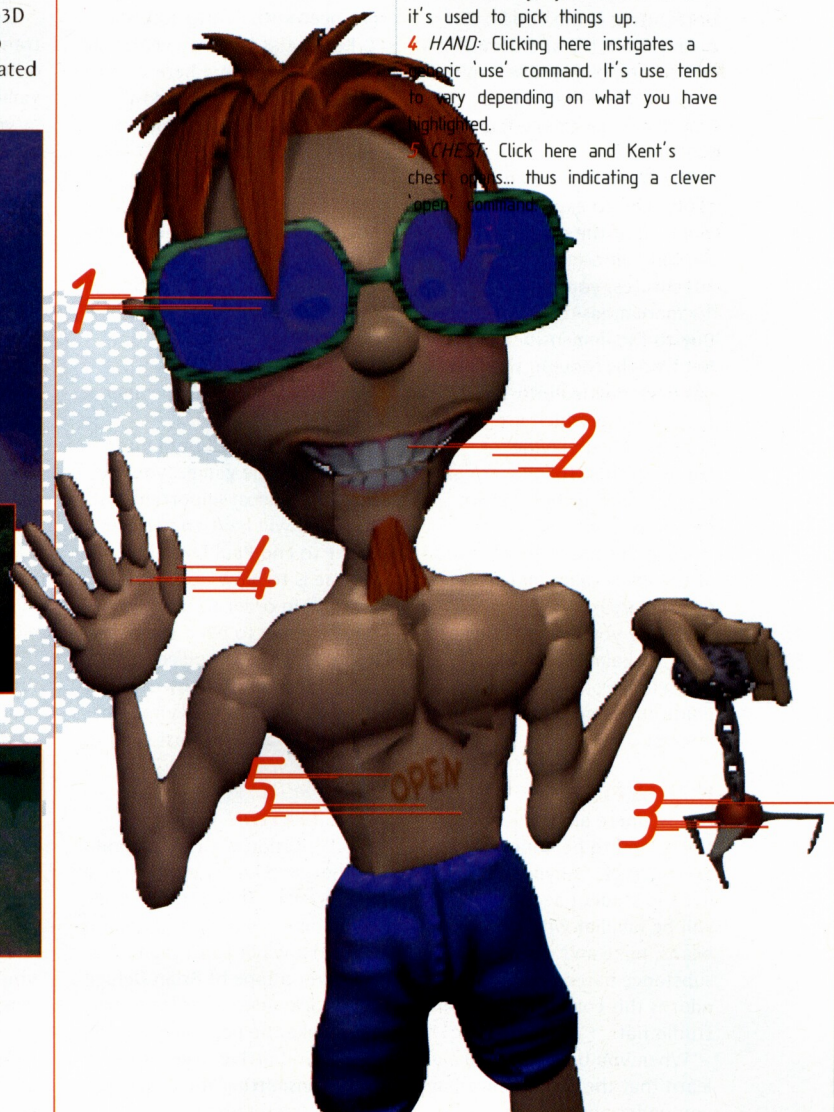
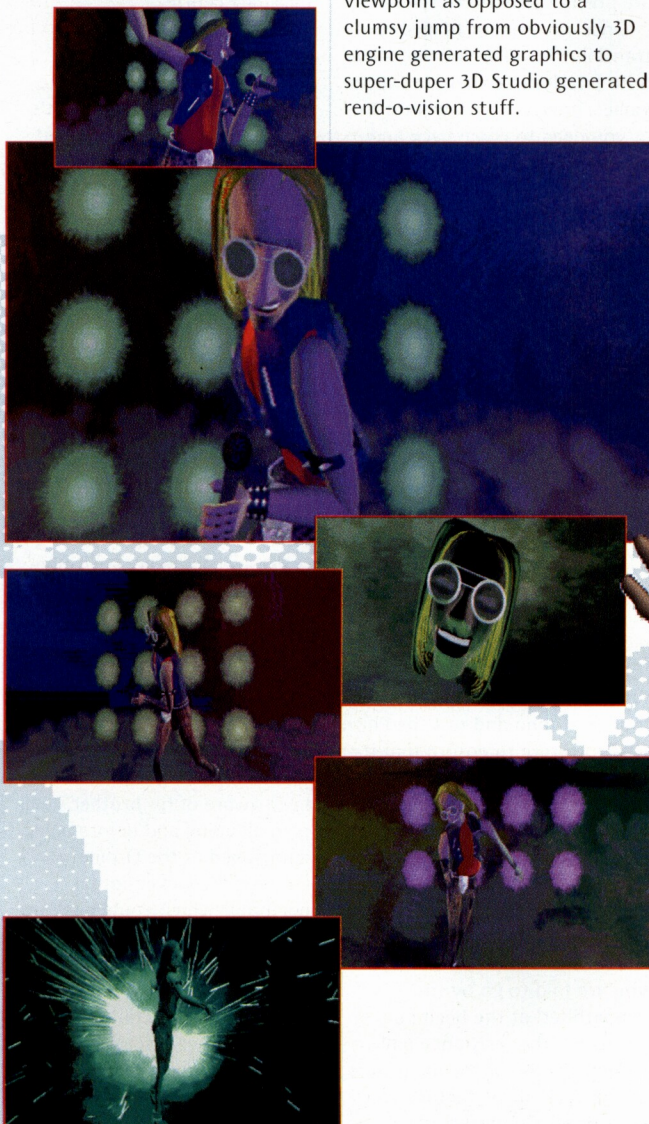
1 EYES: This makes Kent look at whatever you have highlighted. Bet you didn't guess that eh?

2 MOUTH: Kent can have conversations with all 25 of the characters that are featured in the game. The mouth instigates the conversation before moving on to a more traditional menu based system.

3 GRABBER: This weird contraption is, er... I think, er... supposed to be one of those grabby things you get in arcades. Anyway, whatever it is - it's used to pick things up.

4 HAND: Clicking here instigates a generic 'use' command. It's use tends to vary depending on what you have highlighted.

5 CHEST: Click here and Kent's chest opens... thus indicating a clever 'open' command.



CITY MAP

Neutropolis is pretty damn big, and many of the puzzles involve you rambling all over the place. Come and take a quick look around.

Neutropolis itself is a vast city-state that is under the reign of the evil dictator Paul Nystalux. Policed by the unrelenting Norm Police, it is a dreary, polluted and boring armpit of a city which inspires nothing more than abject boredom from the people that live there.

The True 3D game engine allows you to explore pretty much all of the city and, unlike normal point-and-click adventures, you have access to far more areas of exploration. Due to the immensity of Neutropolis though, the game has been divided into seven basic playing areas which are each self-contained playing environments. The player can travel between these seven locations at will but each 'chapter' in the overall solution of the game takes place in specific areas of the map.

To give you a rough idea of how the game pans out we've had a look round in order to point out some places of interest...

KENT'S FLAT

This is where all of the action starts, and to be honest it's pretty grotty. Anyone who's lived in student accommodation will be familiar with the baked beans, puke and strangely sticky substance based decoration that adorns this compact and bijoux studio flat.

When you begin the game you learn that the Norm Police have you under observation due to

your 'out of the ordinary' behaviour and as a result they are attempting to 'Normalize' you. Whilst incarcerated in the Norm Police jails this involved having elevator music piped into your cell 24 hours a day, but now that you are at home you have to sit in front of a Teletext-based TV station until your brain has been sufficiently addled.

Kent's flat is pretty central to the game and from here you are lead towards Dai's Window Cleaner cradle before moving down into the street.

TV SHOP

The shop is found in the street just around the corner from Kent's flat, and whilst sitting in a large playing area that can be explored, it is one of the only other 'live' areas of this particular section of the map.

The shop itself isn't particularly useful until quite a way into the game... you see, one of the most important tasks that you will have to perform in order to end Paul Nystalux's regime is to blow up the TV station. In order to do this you're going to need some supplies from this place... but we won't go into it in any detail as it would give away a vital plot element that might just spoil the game for you.

TVN STATION

The TV station is a central point in the game and is vital for two major goals. The first time you visit there, your primary goal is to find a way in and then transmit a tape of Brian Deluge's new rock video in order to try and wake the populace up a bit. When you arrive, the station is still transmitting the exquisitely boring Teletext-based

information that we all love so much. Brian's video on the other hand is designed to convince people that they can have fun...

Although a simple goal, the processes and puzzles involved in even entering the station are pretty complex and this whole section makes up a large chunk of the overall game. You'll find yourself wandering all over the place before you finally suss what needs to be done and much like the rest of the game bits of it are pretty surreal.

Once you have managed to transmit the video you will move onto puzzles elsewhere in the game... however, you will return as you need to come back and blow the place up. As you do.

THE PLUSH-REST FURNITURE FACTORY

As far as individual locations go, this is pretty damn big and also extremely important for a number of different reasons. Firstly, you learn that the furniture contains these weird gizmo things that are whispering weird 'normalizing' messages. OK, OK... so there's a conspiracy of some kind going on, but we kind of expected that didn't we?

Secondly we get a different insight into the unusual mentality of the Neutropolis work force in the shape of 'furniture testers'. Yep... hugely fat people are employed to lounge around and test the Plush Rest furniture to ensure that it meets the gruelling standards set by the Norms. Another way of keeping a minority group both quiet and bored... Neutropolis has a lot of chubbies - it's easy to get lardy when you're bored.

Finally, and most importantly, the furniture factory is where you are told to go by the 'Empathiser' at the beginning of the game. The resistance have a hideout in one of the dumpsters at the back of the factory you see... Hmm. Cunning.

THE MINT MALL

Another large location this one... and another one that you end up destroying before the game is over. The mall serves a number of purposes, and these include the obvious... and the not so obvious.

There are two vital plot elements that come together in the mall. A major character is introduced here - Norm 2782, who is the only member of the police force that joins the resistance, and secondly one of the tasks set by Heather must be performed within the corridors of this typically American shopping centre.

ORDINARY OUTPOST

The Ordinary Outpost is quite literally 'bad guy central'... It's where the Norm Troopers and Police are based, it's where Paul 'complete bastard' Nystalux has his hideout and it's also where Saul has been imprisoned. This last bit is the most important element and actually getting the ageing surf-dude out of there is one of the most difficult puzzles in the entire game.

THE STADIUM

The final location of the game is where everything comes together and you finally have to prove what a complete hero you really are. There are basically two main tasks here... firstly you have to get a guitar to Brian Deluge as he waits for you on the stage and secondly you have to try and track down Saul's brain-backup machine. Er...what? This where it all gets really clever you see. It seems that Saul has been aware of his brother's evil plan all along and before being imprisoned at the Ordinary Outpost, he jacked into a computer which could back-up the contents of his mind. What this basically means is that despite having been through the mind-altering machines at the Outpost, once rescued Saul can return to normal and lead the resistance to victory. Hoorah, hooray, etc. **N**





Normality is a pretty big game (as I'm sure you've probably sussed by now) and things wouldn't be quite right if we didn't have a wide variety of characters for you to interact with. There are literally hundreds... well, er, almost... of characters in the game, but the main 'cast' as it were is a group of seven individuals who are all vitally important to the plot. All of them crop up throughout the game so it's probably best that we introduce them to you now. Here goes.

This is you. Shades, boots, shorts, dodgy goatee and indisputably filled to overflowing with 'attitude'. He looks like the lead singer from Alice in Chains and is one of the most laid back pseudo surfer/grunge-dudes you're ever likely to come across in a computer game developed in Sheffield. He speaks like Keanu Reeves and is probably best described as a surly, day dreaming... er... loser. A loveable, twenty-something rogue who has the uncanny ability to seem completely and utterly pissed-off with everything.

Despite this far from flattering description, he is the hero... and his shortcomings soon turn to his advantage as he works his way through the game. As you begin your quest Kent is being punished for not adhering to 'Normal' values and you soon learn that he revels in winding the Norms up at every available opportunity.

Although seeming to be a brainless dropout, your manipulation of Kent reveals him to be an impulsive creature that relies on gut-instincts and intelligence to get himself out of situations as opposed to resorting to violence. Aggression, after all, requires you to expend a certain amount of energy... something that Kent finds disagreeable.

When you first meet Dai, you learn that he has taken to living in one of those window cleaner cradle doobies. You know the sort of thing... they dangle precariously on the outside of large buildings and move up and down when you fiddle with a pulley arrangement that makes the whole thing seem incredibly unsafe. Dai, as you can probably guess, is a loony.

Dressed in a big yellow rain coat and possessing one of the most ridiculous moustaches ever, Dai is far more vital to the overall plot that you would initially give him credit for. Like many of the other major characters, he is an important part of the resistance movement against the Norms, but more importantly he is one of the only people left who remembers what the world was like before things were 'normalized'. He remembers the sun... the sky... and probably even the Topless Darts Show on Live TV.

Looking like Iggy Pop (well, like he did when he presented the Brit Award this year) Brian is a bona-fide heavy metal artist who only suffers from one problem... He's never actually heard any heavy metal in his life. This doesn't put him off though, and his contribution towards the revolution is to provide abnormal music with which to wake up the populace.

As a character he is an amalgam of all things rock and roll without having actually experienced any of the necessary excesses. His slurred speech and spaced-out demeanour conjure up images of Jagger, Hendrix and Morrison whilst his complete lack of knowledge of anything to do with recreational narcotics make him appear a bit like the sort of tosser you meet at parties who thinks he's just got stoned after smoking a Marlboro Light.

ASSINATION

HEATHER



The Princess Leia of *Normality*, Heather is an influential figure in the resistance and is one of the first obvious operatives that you encounter. A well meaning and logical lass, Heather is the sort of straight-laced, oddly sexy, anally retentive and officious woman that Clint Eastwood normally ends up having to team up with in Dirty Harry movies. Although bereft of a sense of humour, Heather has an almost magical grasp of logic and numbers and if she were a man she'd probably be across between Data and Mr Spock.

It is Heather that sends you on your first proper 'missions' in the game, and along with Saul Nystalux she appears to be one of the driving forces in the storyline.

NORM
2782



Although the game is full of Norm's, there is only one that we actually learn anything of in the game, and that's 2782. Initially he is a well-behaved and proud member of the Norm Police, but having met Kent in the early stages of the game, and also having suffered a rather unpleasant head injury he soon becomes a useful ally.

Prior to his accident 2782 took great pride in knowing all of the rules of the city off by heart and equally great pride in spouting them at every available opportunity.

SAUL
NYSTALUX



The two most powerful characters in the game are the brothers Saul and Paul Nystalux. Saul is the 'good guy' in the family and you soon learn that it is he who is masterminding the revolution against his evil brother... and the normality of Neutropolis.

If you imagine the most benevolent and chilled-out surf dude in the world and then stick him in an ageing body, you'd get a pretty good idea of what Saul is like. Unfortunately though, when you first hear or encounter this character you learn that he has been imprisoned and his rescue is one of the most vitally important tasks that Heather will set for you.

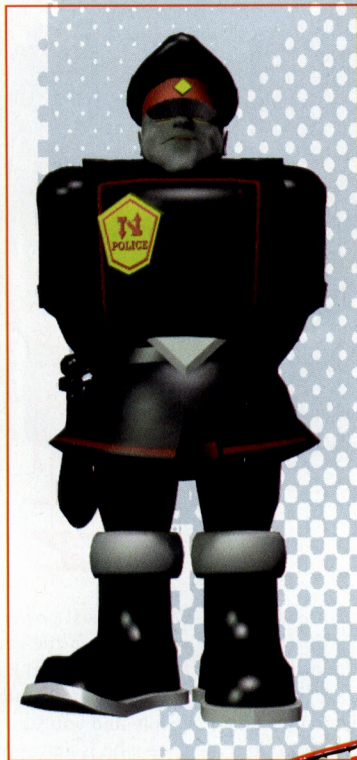
PAUL
NYSTALUX



The bad guy of the game... so bad he even has a typically nasty Vincent Price style beard and 'tache and an incredibly bad dress sense. As you progress through the adventure you soon learn that Paul is the mastermind behind the fascist normalizing regime that grips the city. He wants to have complete control over the entire population and by forcing them to conform it makes them easier to manipulate.

It's possible to draw parallels between Paul and many of the truly evil dictators in history... Hitler, Mussolini, Hussein... but we won't do that now because this is supposed to be light-hearted and fun. The upshot of the whole thing is that Paul is a tyrannical, narcissistic bastard whose eventual removal is the main goal of the game.

Normality is published by Gremlin Interactive Ltd



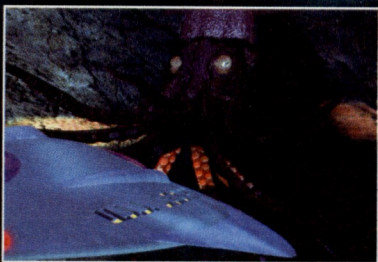
NORMALITY



**PC
ZONE**

S.T.O.R.M.™

READY FOR SOME DEEP SEA DYING?



THE YEAR 2055...
EARTH IS ON THE BRINK OF
EXTINCTION... COMMAND THE
S.T.O.R.M. IN A SPECTACULAR
UNDERWATER ADVENTURE!



Developed by Virtual Studio



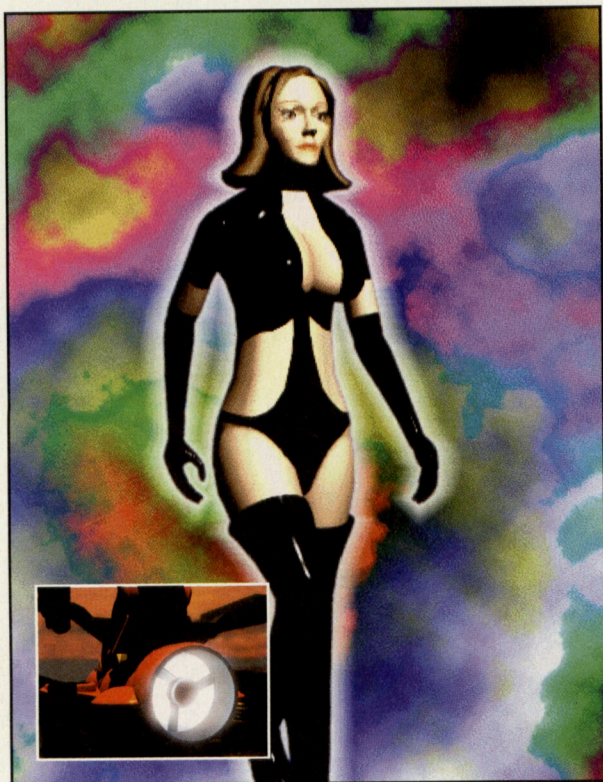
Produced by David J. Klein



Distributed by Electronic Arts



ELECTRONIC ARTS®



(Above) Kim, the bosom-revealing bimbo.

"You'll really like it, it's got a girl with huge breasts in it," the editor of *PC Zone* said. And so **Chris Anderson** was tricked into writing a preview on the new 3D shooter from Core Design.



Blam! Machinehead

I MANAGED TO LEARN A FAIR AMOUNT about *Blam! Machinehead* just from looking at the press release. Not only has the female lead character got enormous mammaries, the game's also got fabulous "eye-popping strip scenes". (Er, I think you'll find that's eye-popping FMV and comic-strip cut-scenes - Ed.) Also, in an amazing new twist on the old Cyberspace theme, you'll come across terminals that allow you to "play the game during penetration". You even get to "strap Dr Stride half-naked to..." (That's enough - Ed.) Spoilsport!

Anyway, you're probably now under the impression that *Blam! Machinehead* is some kind of top-shelf pervy sex game. Well, it's not actually. I've just made you think it is by messing around with the press release. What we are in fact dealing with here is...

(Centre) It's a house. It's a bloody ugly house. Blow it up.

(Below) Unlike other 3D shoot 'em ups, *Blam! Machinehead* is all about blowing things up.



Another 3D shoot 'em up

It's a shoot 'em up, it's in 3D, and while the heroine has got enormous breasts and there are some inoffensive sexual innuendoes in the cut-scenes, the game is aimed at players aged 14 and above who are particularly fond of going round shooting things up in a three-dimensional environment.

You play Dr Kimberley Stride, a female scientist whose assistant has playfully strapped her to a nuclear missile and then sent her rocketing off towards the Machinehead, a deadly virus which has wiped out the majority of the world's population. Your objective is to get to the heart of the virus and blow it up, but before you get there, you'll have to negotiate several danger zones and kill various weird and wonderful beasts.

The game is played out over four missions, with each one offering several areas to explore. As you'd expect, your task is to fly about and shoot everything (*Machinehead* is essentially a 3D kill-fest), but Core have gone to great lengths to

Product details

Developer: Core Design

Publisher: Core Design

Telephone: 01332 297797

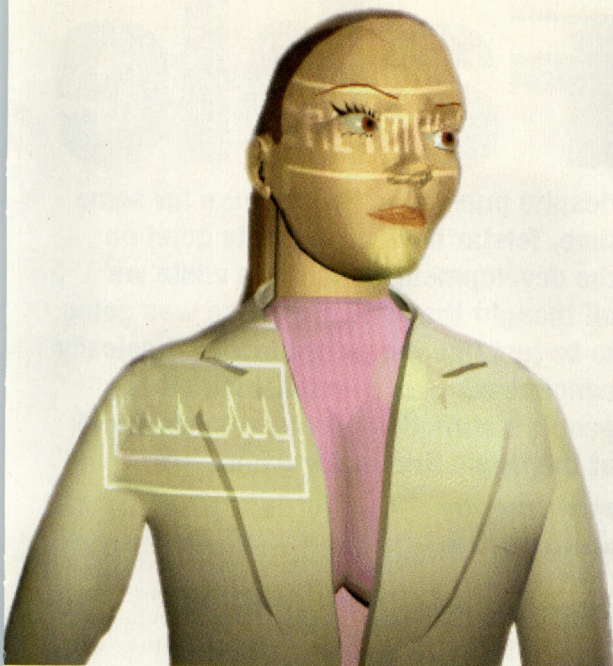
Format: CD-ROM

Release date: May

include strategic elements to ensure that it will appeal to PC gamers as much as the 'we love games that you kill people in' brigade who play console titles.

This has been achieved by including levels that allow players to change the actual game map by accessing Cyberspace terminals. This is a rather neat idea that lets you do things like mend bridges that are broken by finding a Cyberspace key, logging on to a terminal, and 'dragging' the bridge back into the real world. The levels are well designed too, with each mission having wildly different areas which perfectly set the scene for your shooting up enjoyment.





You may find this hard to believe just from looking at the screenshots (er, all the screens look a bit similar), but this is down to the fact that the game is still at an early stage of development, and we could only get shots of the first level. The finished version will have several different terrain types to traverse, among which you'll find a petrified forest, a swamp, a futuristic city, a mountain and even a grassy meadow.

Then to add to all the tension, your progress will be constantly hindered by your wayward assistant Orville (the Geek) who will take every single opportunity to make life as difficult for you as possible. Consequently, you will have submissions to complete in which you will have to carry out whatever dastardly tasks Orville cares to dream up for you.

Although we've seen only a portion of the game so far, *Blam! Machinehead* looks as though it may just get hit the right balance between fast and furious gameplay and taxing strategy sections. *Blam! Machinehead* is set for a May release, so we're all keeping our fingers crossed that with a bit of luck we'll have it for review in our next issue. **Z**

(Above) Kim, the nuclear scientist.

(Below) The lovely Kim encourages the enemy to eat someone's mother.



Work at Mission Studios long enough and you'll get REALLY good at geography.

Matthew Harmon
Vice-President of
Development/Jetfighter III Lead
Programmer.
Mission Studios Corporation.

Featuring:
2,000,000 square miles of scenery.

First-person cinematic interface.

Extensively landscaped and populated game world.

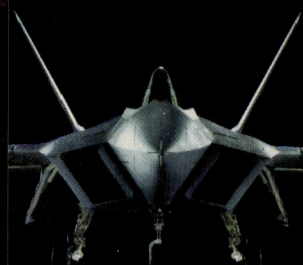
Seamless point-to-point flight.

Free-flight capability.

U.S. GOLD

MISSION STUDIOS

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JETFIGHTER III



(Left and above) All of the backdrops were hand-drawn before being coloured on the PC. The result is rather spectacular.

SIMBIOSIS INTERACTIVE ARE A relatively small developer based in the middle of Paris... quite why they're based in Paris is unclear as the entire staff seems to be either American or Swedish. Oh well. Anyway, *Fable* is the team's first fully-fledged game and is in turn

Fable

Despite publishing PC software for some time, Telstar have been pretty quiet on the development front. For a while we all thought the software house was going to be just like the record label... basically concentrating on re-publishing other people's stuff. **John Davison** takes a look at the firm's first major game.

Product details

Developer: Symbiosis Interactive

Publisher: Telstar Electronic Studios

Telephone: 01932 222232

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: April

the first original game title to be released by Telstar Electronic Studios.

Unlike many other teams and development houses who would try to launch into the market with something over-ambitious and somewhat crappy, this pair has been working for the past year or so on a traditional point-and-click adventure. Okay, so it may not be a particularly original idea, but having taken a look at the game at the Symbiosis studio, the whole thing seems to be shaping up rather nicely indeed.

The game takes place in a mythical land called Bulkane where humans are watched over by strange alien creatures known as the Mecubarz. As the action begins, you learn of an act of treachery by a group of humans which leads to the damnation of the people of Bulkane and the division of the land into four elemental domains ruled by twisted overlords. The Mecubarz are pretty pissed off you see... and seeing as these human things are terribly unreliable they have

decided to punish them. To do this they've made each of the domains take on many of the attributes of the appropriate element. In one place it snows a lot... in another it rains etc, etc.

All this is your typical twisted fairy-tale stuff, but things start to get interesting when you learn that your job is to traipse around and sort everything out. Playing the role of a Disney-esque weedy little kid by the name of Quickthorpe (Quickthorpe! I ask you!), your job is to explore the world and bring together four elemental jewels that will restore normal conditions to Bulkane. Once you've done this, you have to go a-meanderin' again and track down a big book called The Archive that will put everything into perspective and pull together the pieces of the fable so that they make sense. Apparently.

Lucas-bashing... again

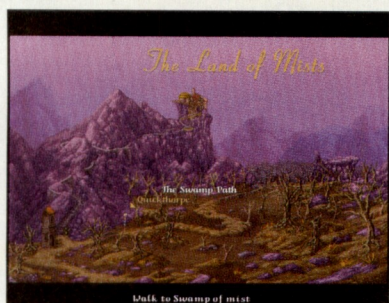
As with any adventure game these days, it's quite clear that the team have the LucasArts games set quite firmly in their sights. The point-and-click interface is intelligent and extremely simple to use and all the characters have been nicely drawn and boast a remarkably cartoon-like quality.

Where *Fable* really excels, though, is in the background artwork. If you take a look at the few shots that we have scattered across these pages I'm sure you'll agree that the quality of the art





(Left and above)
Everything is in SVGA
and it makes such
a difference – just
compare this to some-
thing like *Kingdom
O'Magic*, which we've
reviewed on page 63.



is fantastic. As with Sierra's *King's Quest* adventures, all the backdrops were originally hand-drawn before being scanned into the PC and then coloured. The end result is stunning and with added effects such as sunlight streaming in through windows and subtle animation ranging from rippling water to swirling smoke, it has to be said that this is one of the best looking point-and-clickers around.

Obviously it's not just the graphics that have been laboured over – as with any self-respecting adventure game *Fable* is a full talkie with thousands of lines of dialogue. As we go to press Telstar are still negotiating the signing of a 'big name' to supply some of the voices. Nothing is confirmed as yet but there are numerous rumours concerning certain English comedy talent. And his name is J... ooh. No. Can't tell you. Sorry. You'll just have to watch out for the review when we take a look at the game in detail in a couple of month's time. **Z**

(Below) There are some splendid lighting effects in some of the scenes. Check out the light streaming through the ceiling.



I am thankful for and love living in the age of technology. Still, it's too bad more fantasy and heroic elements from the ancient past haven't survived the progression of time. At least there's still myth in science.

Dan Kaufman
Programmer/Artist.
Mission Studios Corporation.

Featuring:

Advanced light source intensity shading.

Quick mission load times.

Precision, non-warping texture mapping.

Moving, pitching aircraft carrier.

Authentic 3D virtual cockpit.

US GOLD

MISSION

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JETFIGHTER III

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Mankind had no future.

Until now.

take control of
an elite core of Cyborg
freedom fighters in a
desperate attempt to
free Mankind.

- 20 missions
- 4 terrains
- 65 different enemy types
- Zoom modes for
close in view of the
action
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artificial
intelligence
- detailed armoury
& enemy status
display
- furious 3d combat
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scenarios
- SVGA graphics
- Windows 3.1 &
Windows 95
- Windows 95
supports Modem,
Serial & Network
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Love is like a butterfly, it's soft and gentle as a sigh. The multicoloured moods of love are like its satin wings. Love makes your heart feel strange inside; it flutters like soft wings in flight. Love is like a butterfly – a rare and gentle thing. Here's **Charlie Brooker** with a preview of a new beat 'em up.

Pray For Death



THE AVERAGE PC GAMESPLAYER IS somewhat spoilt for choice at the moment as far as beat 'em ups are concerned. You've got yer hardy perennials (*Street Fighter* and *Mortal Kombat*), yer rather top whizzy 3D arcade conversions (*Virtua Fighter Remix*, and the forthcoming *Tekken*), yer home-grown PC fight-o-ramas (*FX Fighter*, *Warriors*), and even a couple of wouldn't-touch-it-with-a-bargpole travesties (*Rise Of The Robots 1* and *2*). What we haven't got, however, is a conversion of the SGI-rendered arcade orgy of pugilism: Nintendo's *Killer Instinct*.

Aha! But here's something that looks fairly similar. Cue *Pray For Death*, Virgin's forthcoming 2D beat 'em up. Your task, of course, is to kick the shit out of the various characters, but there's also a two-player mode, in which you and a friend can try to thrash the living daylight out of each other.

Each of the characters is formed from an impressive pre-rendered sprite with

bags of animation. The first thing that strikes you is how large they are – some of the fighters reach around two-thirds of the total screen height. You would have to be an insane, babbling imbecile to express any surprise whatsoever at the revelation that each character has access to a multitude of over-the-top 'special moves' and devastating combos. Furthermore, seasoned gamers will scarcely raise an eyebrow upon learning that *Pray For Death* also features a very healthy dose of blood and gore.

Fist of fun

There are 12 fighters in all, and in the grand tradition of fighting games, they are a pretty weird bunch who wouldn't look out of place at a high society fancy dress do. There's robots, Bruce Lee look-alikes, swamp creatures... something for everybody, in fact (unless you've always harboured a secret desire to lead Thora Hird into battle, that is).



(Left) Here, smell my foot. Oh, sorry Jun Fan. Didn't mean to hurt you.

Product details

Developer: Lightshock

Publisher: Virgin

Telephone: 0171-368 2255

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: May

Each character has its own strengths and weaknesses (the traditional formula for which runs something like this: Strength equals Size divided by Agility, multiplied by three if the character in question is a 'boss'), and a silly name. I mean, really, who would christen their offspring 'Painbringer'?

Gameplay-wise, the action is fairly fast and furious, with the giant sprites apparently untroubled by the usual problems that PC processors encounter while trying to chuck them around.

Pray for the finished product

The work-in-progress version we fiddled about with still had a fair way to go before completion: the computer AI had yet to be added, and there was a distinct lack of any kind of sound effect (though we added our own grunts, groans and moans, which proved quite amusing). Nonetheless, if the missing elements are to be as polished as the in-game visuals, this could well be a welcome entry into the beat 'em up league. Fret ye not, for as soon as we get a finished copy, we'll tell you all about it. Stay on this channel for future developments. **Z**

(Below) Giant robots, Egyptian gods... they're all here. And they're all violent.

(Below left) Don't worry about it, Anubi old chap. Here, have you seen my new ring? Oops.



IN PRODUCTION



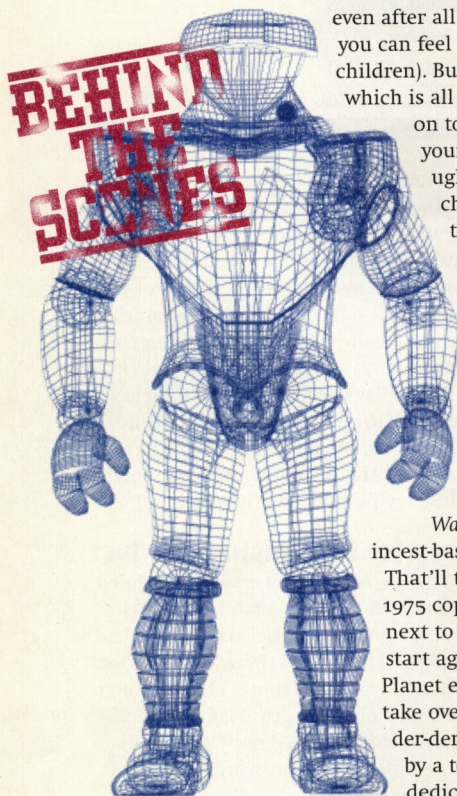
**Ultima
Underworld**
came first,
then 'Ultima
Underworld In
Space' (aka
System Shock).

Now 'System Shock
Outdoors' has arrived.

Patrick McCarthy straps on his
special equipment and gets down to it.

Terra Nova

(Below) Your suit.
As you can see, it's
made entirely of
chicken wire.



(Below) Aiiiiieeee!
Shoot the trees! Shoot
the trees! (Sorry about
that, my father used to
build by-passes.)

IT'S THE FUTURE, AND YOU ARE A BACK-woodsman of rare charm in a not un-hippy like pair of dungarees, with 46 children and a wife with a bloke's name, who still does dirty stuff even after all these years (not that you can feel much after all those children). But you love each other, which is all that matters. You live on top of a mountain and your grandparents are so ugly and unremittingly cheerful that you make them sleep in the woodshed, and only allow them to come inside the house for Thanksgiving dinner. Hang on a minute... I seem to have got *Terra Nova*, the hot new game from Looking Glass Technology, mixed up with *The Waltons*, the feel-good, incest-based TV series from hell. That'll teach me to leave my 1975 copy of the *Radio Times* next to my press releases. Let's start again... The story so far: Planet earth is attempting to take over your planet (der-der, der-der), and it's all controlled by a totally evil organisation dedicated to running everything else, called Hegemony.

Which must surely set some kind of benchmark in the World Appropriate (But Unimaginative) Naming of Powerful Organisations Championships.



Vertical software

Like *System Shock*, *Terra Nova* provides a wide range of movement: you can walk and run, make little bunny hops in any direction and crouch down to make yourself a smaller target (or to go to the toilet during particularly frightening passages of a mission). You can look up or down, or from side to side. Looking down is handy for checking whether you've put your shoes on the right feet, and looking down while jetpacking high into the air is pretty darned cool, especially if you go to the toilet while you're up there. Looking up is handy for avoiding diarrhetic pigeons, and can also be used to lob a grenade over prodigious distances (as long as you're not using a target lock).

Obviously all this is going to be a whole lot easier if you have an extra hand and arm (ideally, attached to your body and fully functioning, but shop around outside butchers' dustbins for bargains). Perhaps this will be the first

Product details

Developer: Looking Glass

Publisher: Virgin

Telephone: 0171-368 2255

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: May

game designed exclusively for Siamese twins. A bit of a specialised market - vertical software, I think they call it.

Smile! You're on Candid Camera...

The scenery looks very much like the sort normally seen in one of the better flight sims, which is unsurprising given that these chaps were also responsible for *Flight Unlimited*. The game itself is like a sort of cross between a *Mech* title and *System Shock*, except that the suits you wear in this aren't 50 feet high. You have a few fancy tricks in your suit, too.

Among them are a number of hovering remote-controlled cameras called drones. These live on your back, and are launched from your suit and sent off to check out the lie of the land. The visuals are relayed directly to your helmet, and you can have them on one of the small screens, or your main view for more detail. (It's a shame you can't get these in the shops just yet - they're ideal for





finding out exactly what your flat-mate gets up to in the bathroom when they make those peculiar noises late at night, after they think that everyone else has gone to bed.) Anyway, these handy little peeping-tom devices can be sent automatically to circle a particular location, or controlled manually, and you can even set the height at which they'll fly.

Missions made possible

Other handy helpmates for your missions include instant navigation markers, infra-red viewing filters and a rather

disorientating 360 degree view mode, with mini screens showing the view to your left, right and rear. In real life this would see you keeling over and losing all four views as your helmet gradually filled with a rising tide of vomit, but in this you just shrug, because you're hard.

What more could you possibly want from a game? Well, apart, perhaps, from a section in the manual entitled "Using and Reading Your Helmet". Oh, look, it's got that, too. Do you think you can you wait for the review? I can't. Sometimes life's just *too* exciting. **Z**

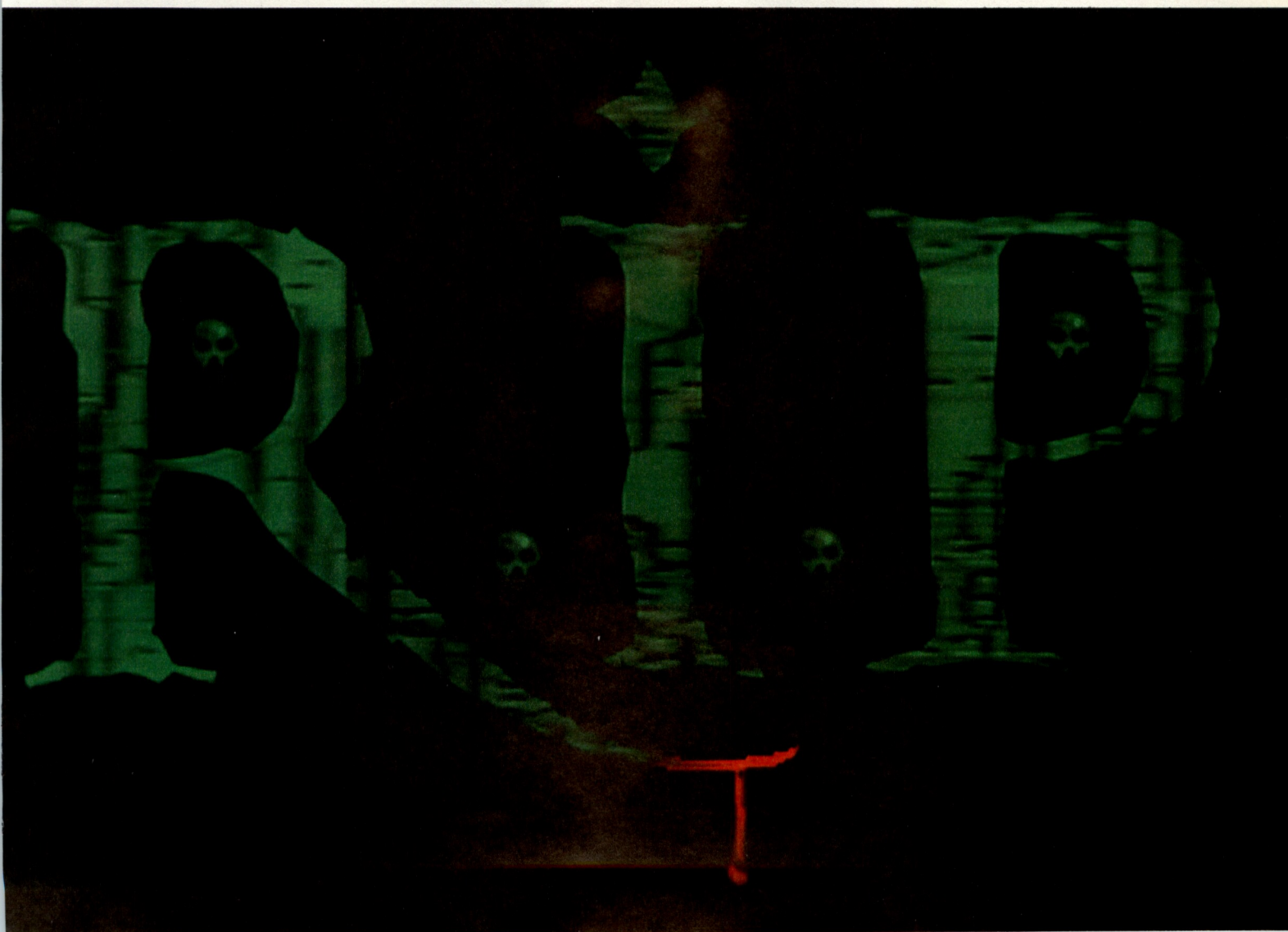


(Above left) Just when we've used up our monthly allocation of fart-lighting jokes, this has to happen.

(Above) This mission's called "Good King Wenceslas".

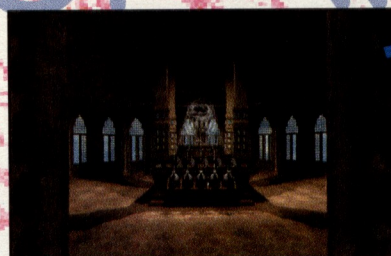
(Centre right) Damn this cold.

(Bottom right) "Last one in's a Jessie!" shouted Trevor.



Chris Anderson takes a look at Activision's latest attempt to revive the halcyon days of PC gaming with the latest in the *Zork* series.

Zork Nemesis



(Right and far right) Stunning rendered backgrounds and scenery make *Nemesis* the best-looking *Zork* game to date.

IN 1977 TWO VERY IMPORTANT THINGS occurred: the music industry was taken by storm by a band called the Sex Pistols, a group of people with funny haircuts who liked spitting at everyone, while elsewhere a group of computer scientists were creating a game for IBM mainframes called *Dungeon*.

On the surface of things it may seem that these two events were unrelated, but if you look at what happened afterwards you might change your mind: the Sex Pistols went on to become one of the most successful and influential bands in the history of music, spawning hundreds of sound-alikes and changing the face of the music scene forever. The computer scientists, for their part, were unwittingly creating a game that would set a precedent for all text adventures that followed, and paved the way for the graphic adventures we play today.

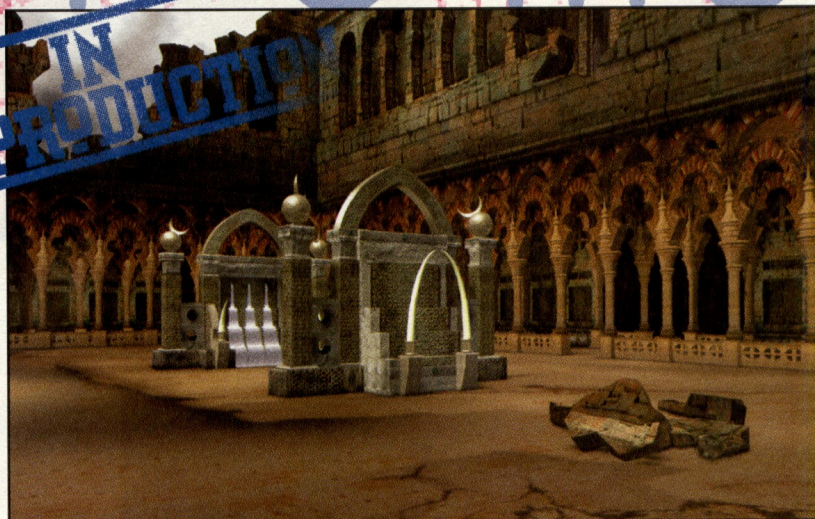
! Hello Hollywood

While Activision haven't used *Nemesis* as a vehicle for tons of FMV sequences and stuck an interactive movie tag on it, they *have* enlisted the aid of various Hollywood supremos to bring a very polished look to the game that perfectly complements the solid gameplay.

The live action video segments were directed by Joe Napolitano, who has worked on several TV projects including *The X-Files*, *Picket Fences* and *Quantum Leap*. The five worlds in the game were designed by Mauro Borrelli, a production designer/director who has several hit movies under his belt, such as *Batman Forever*, Francis Ford Coppola's *Dracula* and *The Godfather 3*.

As a result, *Zork Nemesis* is a computer game which has been enhanced with the use of movie sequences, as opposed to a movie which has had a game stuck on the end of it. Makes you wonder why no one thought of doing it before, really.

(Right) The obligatory lever-pulling puzzle.



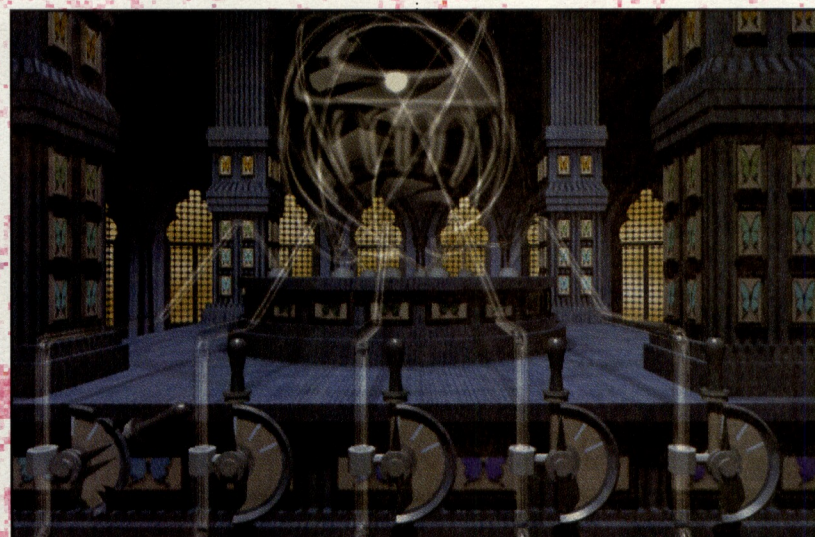
You see, *Dungeon* was the inspiration for the highly successful *Zork* series, a series which opened people's eyes to the fact that they could play games on their PC (well... okay, mainframe at the time). Considering the fact that Activision successfully followed up the *Zork* text adventures with *Return To Zork* and are now about to release *Zork Nemesis*, the enterprising computer scientists who wrote *Dungeon* way back in 1977 can confidently say that they wrote the first game in what was to become the longest running game saga on the PC. No mean feat, I'm sure you'll agree.

So with such an impressive pedigree, *Zork Nemesis* has quite a lot to live up to. But from what we've seen of it so far, it looks capable enough to take the challenge firmly in its stride...

Splendiferous graphical loveliness

Nemesis, like its predecessor, has head-swivelling, mind-boggling, passer-by-impressing graphics that are incredibly detailed. Activision have refused to jump on the 'sod games, let's make a movie' bandwagon and have instead opted to create gorgeous pre-rendered backgrounds which, combined with thousands of animations and over 50 minutes of live video footage, give the game a very cinematic feel without the designers having to resort to filling tons of CDs with full-motion video.

To achieve this admirable feat, *Nemesis* uses Z-vision, Activision's new proprietary game engine technology which allows them to seamlessly integrate the pre-rendered backgrounds with all of the





animations and video so that the gamer is never suddenly jerked back to reality by an obvious video 'drop-in', which would interrupt the flow of the game-play. Speaking of which...

Something evil this way comes...

The Forbidden Lands provide the setting for *Zork Nemesis*. Your quest is to explore these lands and find a way of freeing four alchemists who are being held captive by the Nemesis, an evil rotter who rules this previously unexplored

part of the Zork universe. Along the way you'll have to call on your puzzle-solving skills to find the answers to some 35 teasers, all of which play a key part in unravelling the mystery of the Nemesis' curse. If your grey matter is up to it and you manage to wade through all these riddles, you'll eventually discover the Elixir of Eternal Life which will unlock the secret of the Forbidden Lands and free the alchemists.

Zork Nemesis is looking good at this early stage and with five worlds, adding up to a total of 40 hours gameplay, it's

(Above) Gorgeous hi-res graphics are the hallmarks of this stunning adventure from Activision.

(Above, centre) I've seen some weird telescopes in my time, but this one...

(Above right) You'll have to figure what this puzzle is before you can start solving it.



going to be bigger and better than its illustrious predecessor. As usual, we'll be bringing you fully up to date when we review the game next month. **Z**

Product details

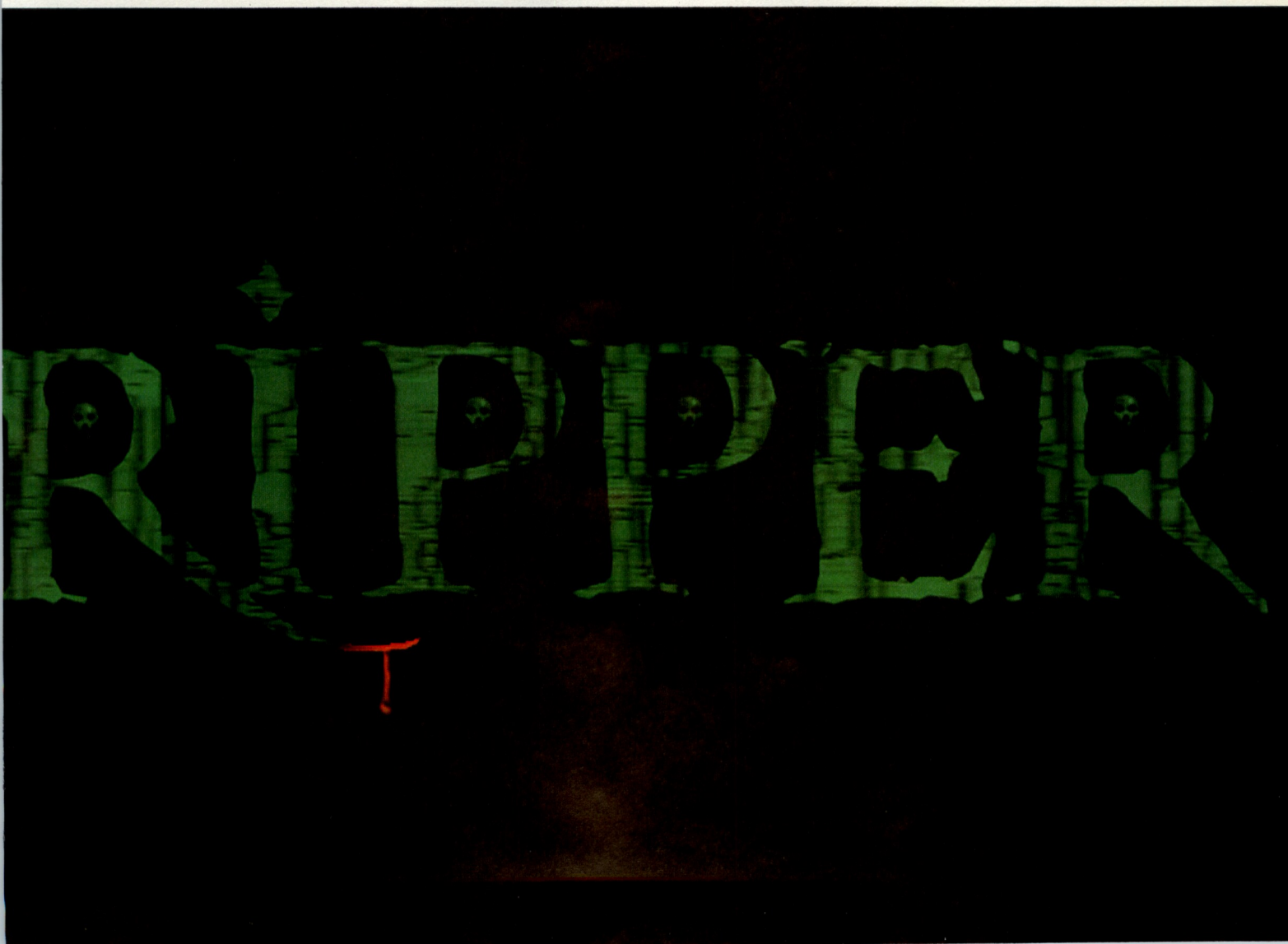
Developer: Activision

Publisher: Activision

Telephone: 0181-742 9400

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: April



Win your very own

CONGO

video before it hits the shops!

CIC and Viacom Newmedia are set to launch the adventure game based on the movie *Congo* in a couple of months. To help things along a bit – and to make sure you know what it's all about when it gets here – we've got some copies of the video to give away.



THE FILM ITSELF WAS ONLY OUT A little while ago, the game isn't due out for another couple of months yet, and the video won't be available until next month... but we've got 20 copies of the *Congo* vid (which are worth about £80 a pop at the moment) to give away in this extremely easy compo.

All you have to do to enter is answer the simple questions below and send your entry to:

Drink it in the Congo
PC Zone
Dennis Publishing
19 Bolsover Street
London
W1P 7HJ

All entries must be in by May 9 1996. No correspondence will be entered into, and anyone daring to ring up and ask about the compo will be hunted down and shot like a wild animal before being roasted over an open fire deep within the gardens of Regents Park. The editor's decision is final. So there.

Question 1: Which author wrote *Congo*?

- a) Irvine Welsh
- b) Michael Crichton
- c) Isaac Asimov

Question 2: Which popular drink were you asked to "drink it in de Congo"?

- a) Coca-Cola
- b) 7-Up
- c) Um Bongo

Question 3: What creatures feature prominently in *Congo*?

- a) Gorillas
- b) Giraffes
- c) Gazelles

Drink it in the Congo

Question 1: a ☐ b ☐ c ☐ Question 2: a ☐ b ☐ c ☐ Question 3: a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

Name:

Address:

.....

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BURGESS MEREDITH TAHNEE WELCH

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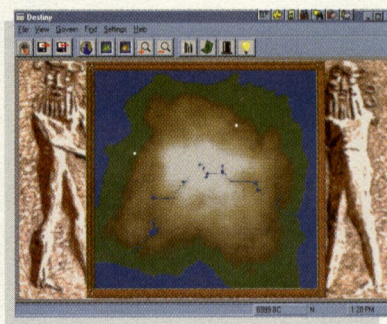
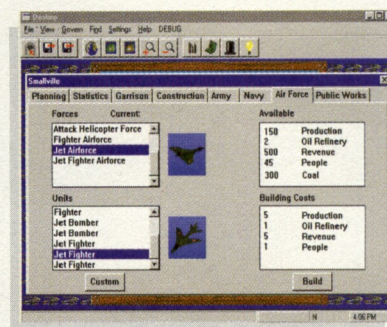
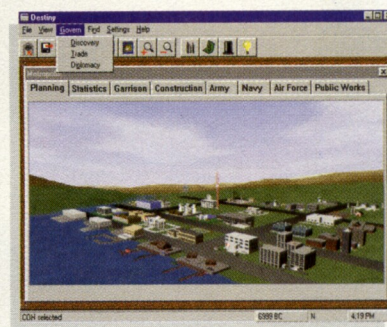
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Set your 'pleasure polyps' onto 'spoooge mode'. Cancel all forthcoming weddings, relationships, social events and babies. Our first taste of *Quake* – the follow-up to *Doom* and the gaming event of the year – is here. **David McCandless** gets all sweaty around the belly...

QUAKE

QUAKE

"But surely my lord, something of such dimensions would not fit in such an aperture?"

And so it came to pass that on that fateful evening, Saturn's Day, day twenty-fourth of the second month of the ninety-sixth year of the twentieth century, a file, large but humble, wide but not empty, emblazoned with the legend QTEST1.ZIP didst materialise on the holy Internet site of iD Software. Lo and many an unsuspecting ethereal traveller did pass the shady file and paid it none heed. Until one did espy the mysterious 'file description' symbols:

The Official Quake Deathmatch TEST
Released Saturday, February 24, 1994
Copyright (c) 1996 iD Software, inc.

"Hmmm," pondered the traveller. "Tis an official public test release of *Quake: Son of Doom*. How interesting but forsooth I have many illegal paintings to - *QUAKE!!! Quake?* Jesus! It's *Quake!* What the f-?"

His cries of astonishment were heard by many a nearby traveller. In the oral tradition of his people, the word was spread round the world at great haste. Soon the holy site was deluged by the clamouring of many travellers. So packed was the site that many important journalistic wise men were unable to enter the area and didst get into a 'strop'. But this magical, fortuitous discovery was met by all with the pealing of joy-like bells and with the sound of 'love juice' slapping on cobblestone.

WELL, WELL, WELL, WELL, WELL, well - it's here. Sort of. *Quake* - aka 'The Game Of Our Dreams', aka 'We're

Not Worthy', formerly known as 'Spooze II: Yamming Great Continents Of Spooze' - has finally arrived. Okay, okay, it's just a three-level, network-only game demo, released for bug-testing purposes. And okay, ostensibly, it has no monsters, very little in the way of super-complex architecture, nothing at all to offer as a single-player game, and runs very slowly on anything less than a Pentium, but it's a taster. And not just a brief dollop on the tongue of expectation, but a whole facial of the game they're already calling Marriage-Breaker, Son of DoomBachelor.

This sketchy blueprint of things to come gives us a good indication of what *Quake* will be like, how it will look, what it will contain, what it won't contain, how the things it will contain will make the things it won't contain er, containable, how it will play, and how it will work. Rest assured: *Quake* is guaranteed to leave computer keyboards and monitors all over the world frosted with spooze.

First Impressions

Well, it's a first-person perspective game, which wouldn't break the Trades Description Act if it was subtitled "*Doom III*". It's you, a bunch of serious hardware, a variety of enclosed environments (castles, dungeons, bases

etc), monsters, blood, and lots of Satanic imagery. This isn't really that surprising coming from iD, who have built their success on games which basically involve 'powering around a level and shooting things'.

But while it doesn't, in its current pre-alpha state, make "*Doom* look like *Pong*", it does differ radically from its grandfather. Where *Doom* was sci-fi aliens' death carnage, *Quake* sports medieval torture chamber, portcullis-type decor.

Where *Doom* used flat 2D sprites, *Quake* uses fully 3D polygon-rendered characters. Where *Doom*'s levels were essentially clever 2D, *Quake*'s are fully 3D with ramparts, turrets, tunnels, and multiple layers of scenery. *Quake* does look light years beyond *Doom*, but gameplay-wise, despite new effects like looking up and down, jumping, and swimming, they're not dissimilar.

Obviously, this is an early sneak preview and it would be wrong to build up too much of an impression of the final game, but right here, right now, PC Zone can tell you that it not only looks like the best first-person perspective blaster ever, but also the multi-player game of the millennium. Read on and spooze. **Z**

Mentions of 'Spooze' in this article: 15



THE LEVELS

The *Quake* test comes with three built-in levels, fully implemented in terms of graphics, lighting, and objects but lacking monsters or any other single player element. For argument's sake we'll call them **The Castle (small), The Dungeon (medium), and The Space Base (large).**

The Castle



- You're in what appears to be a sandstone edifice. A strange insignia - thousands of crushed skulls - adorns the wall in front. Directly ahead is a square hole in the floor. • Look up.
- The walls rear up into the sky and turn into curving, high-vaulted rafters. You feel an immense sense of size and realism. The perspective distortion you associate with looking up and down in similar environments is nowhere to be seen.
- Leave room.



- You enter a corridor, draped in shadow. Four decapitated heads mark the end of the hallway. A doorway leads north. • Go north.



- You find yourself in a large, open room. Steps on one side lead through an arched portal into an L-shaped corridor which can just be seen through the pillars on the other side of the chamber.
- Go down corridor.
- Further down the hallway you come to a junction. A blood-stained door attracts your attention to the left. • Shoot door.
- You hear the scraping of stone gears as the heavy granite door slides away. Beyond is a platform. • Walk onto platform.



- From your vantage on the platform you can see a wide-open plaza overshadowed by several suspended platforms. The lighting is gloomy and atmospheric. The corridor you traversed earlier continues around and above this plaza.
- Jump down.



- A quick exploration of the room reveals a hole in the ceiling which leads to the first room. You can just see a tell-tale eviscerated corpse nailed to the wall. • Examine walls.

(Left) All of the new characters are polygon generated as opposed to sprites.



DeathMatch

The *Quake* DeathMatch Test (QTEST1.ZIP 4,316,050 bytes) is available for download from:

ftp.idsoftware.com

Multiplay BBS (0181-900 1266)

CIX conference *Quake* Files

It requires 8Mb and a hefty PC to run (DX2/66 or better, P90 recommended), and needs 16Mb of RAM to run under Windows 95.


```

QUAKE TEST 1 (V.0.1)
COPYRIGHT (C) 1996, ID SOFTWARE, INC.

THIS IS A DEATHMATCH TEST.
IT IS NOT A DEMO, AN ALPHA,
OR A SHAREWARE VERSION.

HAVE YOU READ AND AGREED TO THE
INFORMATION IN THE LICENSE.TXT FILE?

YES

LICENSE AGREED TO.
ALL FUNCTIONS ENABLED.

EXECING QUAKE.WE
EXECING MACR1.SPA
EXECING MACR2.CPG
FORMING A S
JMAP TEST1B

```


The Quake Test was met with a somewhat 'mixed' reaction from the on-line community, many of whom had spent months beating their sticks over the very thought of *Quake*. The responses on the Usenet groups alt.games.quake and rec.games.computer.quake.misc (mainly US), and the CIX-based *Quake* conference (UK thankfully) ranged from the evangelical and orgasmic to the murderous and deeply offensive, going through every shade of unimpressed, enthusiastic, livid and suicidal sentiment en route. We took a pick of the choicest quotes floating around.

On the engine...

"The engine is a sweet piece of work, it pretty much makes *Duke 3D* look like a waste of code."

"The engine looks great. The lighting effects are awesome. The game looks very realistic."

"The weapons need improvement, as does the engine speed, but the game looks very promising. The intricate details really enhance the realism."

"The weapons do suck. Their graphics are poor. The explosions suck."

"At 800x600, the graphics are truly unbelievable."

"You can download this incredible engine and take it for a... well, not a drive, because there aren't any wheels, but you can sure rev it a lot. Lotsa power under that hood."

"What ever happened to the trusty spacebar? I don't want to walk into a door like a moron to open it!"

"I think it's the most awesome engine I've yet seen..."

On the weapons...

"It's really *Doom* all over again. You're running around a castle with a shotgun, a double-barrelled shotgun, and an automatic nail gun (yes, a nail gun). Oh, and let's not forget that all-creative rocket launcher."

"A double-barrel is a weapon I can identify with; I know what that baby does. There's a sick feeling of satisfaction one gets from shoving the barrel into someone's gut and blowing the hell out of their innards, watching the blood fly out of their back..."

"I guess there's just something to be said for a game where you can see someone's head flying through a doorway after they get creamed. :-)"

"And what's up with the semi-automatic, double-barrelled shotgun? What about reloading it? Now, the *Quake* guy doesn't even have hands! Is there even any weapon for you to use if you run out of ammo?"

"I must've played with the grenade launcher for around half an hour last night."

"Heck, why do we need a hammer then? Just hit the bugger over the noggin with the butt of the shotgun! :-)"



The Space Base

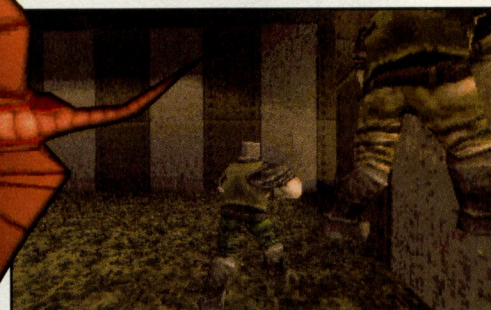
To fully test the test (as it were), we spent a good few days (yes, days) playing the third level on six (yes, six) player deathmatch. Here are a few choice moments, captured for you with our special FragCam™.



The boys line up for the team photo before the festivities begin. There's Killer, Mr Mop, Knuckles and er, Miles, who annoyed your rocket-launcher-carrying photographer before the snap was taken. He paid the price as will anyone who crosses me – muhahaha!



Come get some. The expression on the player's face changes depending on his actions. You either get pain (scrunched up), at ease (scrunched up), or firing weapon (scrunched up). The key phrase here is "scrunched up".



Why not surprise an unsuspecting opponent by leaping lightly behind them and then blowing their head off with a shotgun?



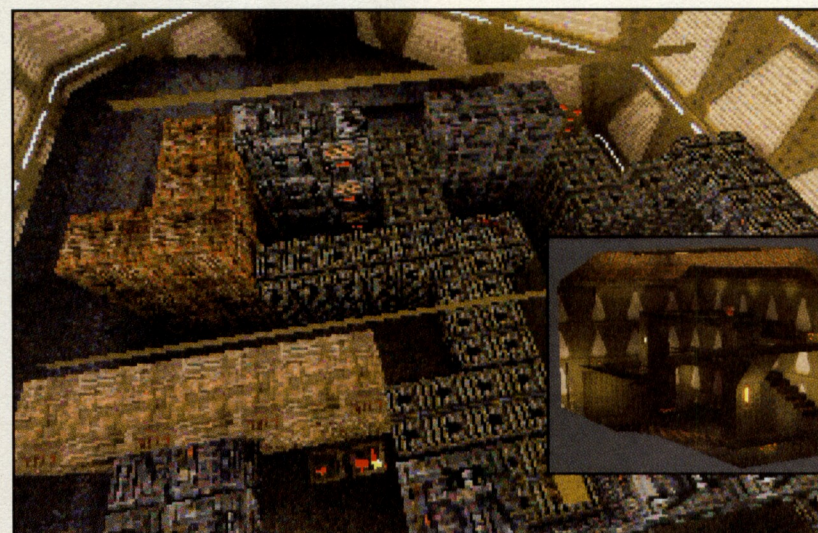
And why not, when the trophy is so amusing. Yes, it's Miles's head, a look of agony transfixed on his face for ever. Muhahahaha.



As you would expect (and demand), each shotgun hit extracts about 12 pints of blood from your opponents. Then it's time for them to jerk spasmodically and scream in pain.



The 'back garden' of the Space Base is a veritable frag feast. Players arising from the water are sitting ducks for a well-placed rocket, while a platform accessible by lifts is the perfect sniping point.



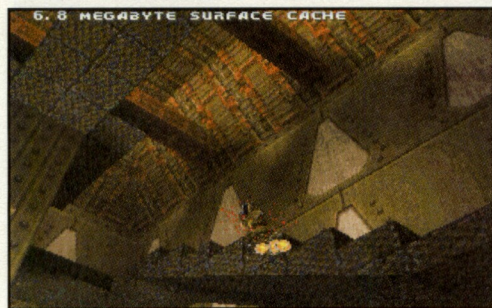
Here are some architectural highlights from level three (as seen from our special 'We've Turned Clipping Off-a-cam'). The 'curvy ladder' is a precarious walk to reach the most powerful protection in the game: the red armour. Unfortunately, navigating the ladder is rather perilous – you're a complete sitting duck on the way up. The 'chaingun maze' occupies a small corner of the map, but offers some serious LAPD-style dodging and ducking down corridors.



Another cool thing about *Quake* is the variety of ways your crushed enemies will die. Some explode (with appropriately gushy, intestines-slapping-wall sound effects). Some drop to their knees, clutching their throats and gargling horribly. Some double up with pain and lie there in a crumpled heap. And some will just tumble backwards and thump heavily onto the ground.



Top tip: when dashing into battle scenes be sure to avoid rockets.



The 'mlook' feature in *Quake* (ie the ability to look up and down while holding down a key or mouse button) enables you to get those hard-to-reach snipers.



Here's someone getting some nails where they're most needed (ie in his body). One step left or right to avoid the onslaught, and he'll be in the drink and swimming for his life.



Shall I dabble in this or wait until the end and pick off the loser?



Little does Knuckles know that he is soon to receive a copious helping of nine-inch death needles from the nail gun. He should use the mouse (instead of the keyboard like all crap people do).



Oh, you think you're hard enough? Straddling the top of the steps like a big girl's nanny goat gruff? Oh, you reckon yourself, eh? Come on then if you think you're hard enough. Aaargghhhhhh (scream). You are hard enough. Leg it!!



Each player can set a colour for their shirt and trousers. This can lead to rather flowery fashion statements. Luridly coloured players also stand out from the gloomy walls like traffic beacons so tend to die often (and horribly).



On deathmatch...

"I've played the network game. Two Pentiums with 16Mb RAM... the 'test' still sucks big!!!! MAN, MAJOR LET DOWN!!!! iD has regressed!! The weapons are pathetic... the explosions look like candy fire crackers!!!! The missiles are a joke, you can't even see them and they blow up like bottle rockets."

"It's interesting here at work because I posted the *Duke Nukem 3D* shareware up on your net and people really like it, but nobody is playing head-to-head. However, I put the *Quake* test up and we've been playing it just about every night."

"Deathmatch is much more of a 3D affair now than it was before – it really adds a new dimension to things (no pun intended), just as *Descent* deathmatch requires different skills and tactics than *Doom*."

"I played it eight-player network and it was the most fun I've ever had in a 3D game. Pure mayhem. I love *Quake*."

"I love the levels. Tons of nooks and crannies to hide and blast people. I like shooting people through the floor grill on level two."

"However, whether iD bashers want to admit it or not, the game is certainly very entertaining when it comes to deathmatch gameplay."

"Played four-player deathmatch on Sat. night. Bye Bye *Doom*!!!!!"

"*Quake* multi-player!!! This game is bloody excellent!! It rocks!! It rules!! etc. :)"

On the hype...

"If iD re-released *Wolf 3D* and slapped '*Quake*' on the box, it would still make money..."

"*Doom* was great because it came out of the blue and smacked the gaming world between the eyes. *Quake*, by contrast, has been anticipated so much that it can't help but be a let-down for many."

"Not even going to bother arguing with you as I can't see how you can tell from a pre-alpha deathmatch test."

"Isn't it remarkable that, even given how ridiculously hyped the game has been and how the current release is only an early test, many people are still very, very impressed by it?"

"The point is not that the *Quake* Test is a great game. The point is that it, in my opinion, has great potential."

"Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails will be doing the music/sound fx. I can't wait, NIN kicks ASS so I know the music in *Quake* will totally kick ass too!"

"This is true, sad but true. Look at all the people defending the *Quake* test... not on the strength of anything we see in the test, but just on the idea that iD could do no wrong."

The Quake Test was met with a somewhat 'mixed' reaction from the on-line community, many of whom had spent months beating their sticks over the very thought of *Quake*. The responses on the Usenet groups alt.games.quake and rec.games.computer.quake.misc (mainly US), and the CIX-based *Quake* conference (UK thankfully) ranged from the evangelical and orgasmic to the murderous and deeply offensive, going through every shade of unimpressed, enthusiastic, livid and suicidal sentiment en route. We took a pick of the choicest quotes floating around.

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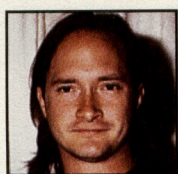
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Interview with ID Software

YES, THE DEMIGODS AT ID GRANTED us a small e-mail audience, to ask them about *Quake* and all who will sail in her. We spoke to Mike

Wilson, Biz Guy #2, at ID.

PC Zone: In the test text file, it says that ID welcome gameplay suggestions posted to the *Quake* Usenet forum. How much notice do you take of people's suggestions, for say, new weapons, or monsters, or effects?
Mike Wilson: We read as many as we can. Most of them are ideas that we have considered already and that either don't contribute to gameplay or don't work well within the technology. And many are just plain shitty. But occasionally there is a diamond in the rough...

PCZ: A lot of the 'criticisms' of the test release have been people whinging about little things like explosions, or the lack of doors, or how it's 'too dark', or there are 'no monsters' (doh). Isn't it frustrating, after spending time developing something quite obviously ninjascope, to have people poke holes in unimportant spot effects?

MW: We pretty much ignore any feedback not pertaining to deathmatch play, since

that was the sole focus of this pre-alpha test. Very, very little of the single-player elements that you see in the levels are finished. Most are placeholders. As far as the frustration, we knew very well that the experience would not be satisfying for anyone who didn't have access to a network. When all you have to do is run around and pick up armour, all there is to do is pick things apart. The feedback from the deathmatch play has been stellar, so we aren't frustrated in the least.

PCZ: What would you say to the criticism that *Quake* is just *Doom III*?

MW: The deathmatching is similar to *Doom* in the game's current state. The gameplay differences will become apparent later. Of course, *Doom III* isn't exactly a shameful thing, from my standpoint anyway!! However, the team here is committed to putting out an offering of sheer genius that will not rely on past laurels.

PCZ: The text file also mentions "some neat new effects we're programming in right now". Any chance of telling us a few?

MW: Nope (with guns to my head).

PCZ: The player characters look really

The Weapons



SHOTGUN The basic weapon in *Quake* is the shotgun. No nonce-sucking pistols here. Instead, a healthy pump action will do a substantial amount of damage in an insubstantial amount of time.



SUPER NAIL GUN Not dissimilar to the nail gun, the super 'merely' doubles the fire-rate and the damage. Particularly effective when fired out of water into somebody's body.



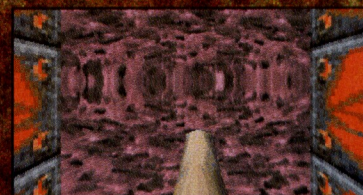
SUPER SHOTGUN The wonderful super shotgun, half-inched out of *Doom* and now fully polygonised. It also makes an awesome Hiroshima-esque noise when let off and - hoozah! - retains the ability to pulverise an armoured opponent in two shots.



ROCKET LAUNCHER *Doom*'s favourite method for blowing yourself up makes it into *Quake*. The rockets now leave vapour trails and detonate on walls, floors and other people's heads.

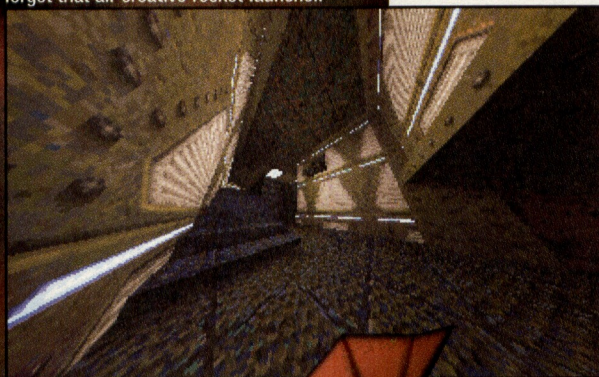


NAIL GUN *Quake*'s version of the chain gun is something you don't want to run towards. Unless you like being crucified by a hail of nine-inch death. Its rapid fire and long range make it the ultimate sniping/shooting someone in the back weapon.



GRENADE LAUNCHER These babies bounce off the walls, tumble effortlessly into the middle of battles and are especially effective for depth-charging underwater snipers.

LIGHTING GUN & CHAINLIGHTING GUN These aren't implemented in the test but while we were imagining what they would be like, we came up with the following words: "awesome", "very deadly" and "spoooge".



(Above) Alter the field of view using the FOV command and the result is like a scene from *Alien³*.

Looking Back

Once the dust has settled and the initial good/bad vibe about a game has gone, a lot of products often deserve a second look. This is where we go back and give 'em another going over.

Top Gun: Fire At Will

MicroProse

With *Wing Commander IV* being such an underwhelming affair, it's nice to see that interactive movies can work if you don't try and do anything too ambitious and keep the FMV (Fuzzy Motion Video) to an absolute minimum.

Top Gun succeeded where *Wing IV* failed because it didn't allow the FMV to overwhelm and impede on the gaming experience. Spectrum Holobyte proved that, used sensibly, FMV can be VFM if you keep it short and sweet.

It's worth pointing out that *Top Gun* wasn't actually marketed as an 'interactive movie', but as a flight sim that was based on a film that was released ten years ago – everyone's expectations were therefore not tremendously high. *Wing Commander IV*, on the other hand, was very much sold as an 'interactive experience' that "starred" Mark Hamill and Malcolm McDowell – and cost a whopping \$10 million to produce. In this case expectations were unfeasibly high because of the money involved and inevitably people were disappointed (as they were with the budget-busting movie *Waterworld*), because they couldn't see where the money had gone.

Maybe *Wing IV* isn't such a bad game after all (Chris admits to loving it) and perhaps it was just a victim of too much hype. MicroProse have proved with *Top Gun* that interactive movies as a genre can work, you just have to remember that ultimately games players want to play a game and not sit staring at ten minute 'segments' of flickering FMV. If they did, then PCs would come with an MPEG card fitted as standard and Mark Hamill would be a very busy man.

Jeremy Wells

Formula One Grand Prix 2

MicroProse

Er... what the bloody hell is going on here then? We got our hands on a copy of *F1GP2* a good couple of months ago now, and as far as we were concerned that particular version was near-as-dammit completed. The cars were all in. The stats were sorted. The track maps were all in there and... well, it seemed pretty much finished as far as we were concerned. Pete loved the game (so much so he practically wanted to perform bizarre sex acts with it) and the general consensus of opinion was that it was A Good Thing. And now it's April and we still haven't heard a bloody peep out of MicroProse or dear Mr Crammond.

Oh yes, we've seen a few later versions of the game and we've said how cool it looks – but what's the point of only magazines like us being able to play it? We can tell you how good it is until we are blue in the face but it doesn't mean a thing unless you lot can play it.

As time goes on the ante is being raised as well. Just three months ago, it was certainly the dog's bollocks as far as racing games were concerned, but now we hear that Psygnosis' amazing *F1* is poised to be unleashed onto the PC. This will seriously steal some of *GP2*'s thunder. But don't get us wrong – Crammond's baby is completely bloody amazing but if it doesn't come out soon it stands a chance of not being at the very top of the heap for long.

We're fully aware that you're all pissed off about the situation and we're equally aware that MicroProse are very nervous about the whole thing. We have been given assurances that the game will be in the shops by the end of April. We'd be keen to hear your views on the thing when you finally see it.

John Davison

Warcraft 2

Blizzard

You wouldn't believe the fuss people were making over this game when it first came out. They were raving about it on the Internet, hailing it as the best strategy title ever. There were even a few misguided sods who had the damn nerve to suggest it was even better than *Command & Conquer*. We reviewed it, but we couldn't see why everyone was so excited. Yes, it's a nice-looking game. Yes, it's fairly addictive, but only for a few days. This is because the missions become repetitive too quickly, and you have to play too many levels before you can use all the weapons and features in the game, so by that time most people have already got bored of the thing.

It has to be said though that when we reviewed it we were wondering if we'd been a bit harsh on the game, but since then, we've spoken to several people who were raving about it at the time who now all agree with me that it becomes too tedious to play beyond a day or two. The same people (and us, I might add) were playing *Command & Conquer* for weeks on end; in fact it's still a fave network game with the PC Zone bods. *Warcraft 2* is good, but it's certainly not brilliant!

Chris Anderson



Cool games

We see hundreds of games over the months but there are a few that we hang on to and continue to play at lunchtime/when we're supposed to be doing more important stuff...

Championship Manager 2

Actua Soccer

Top Gun: Fire at Will

Descent 2

Quake (Deathmatch)

Crap games

There are some games that you can leave in the middle of the room with a big sign next to them saying "please steal me" and you still can't get rid of the bloody things...

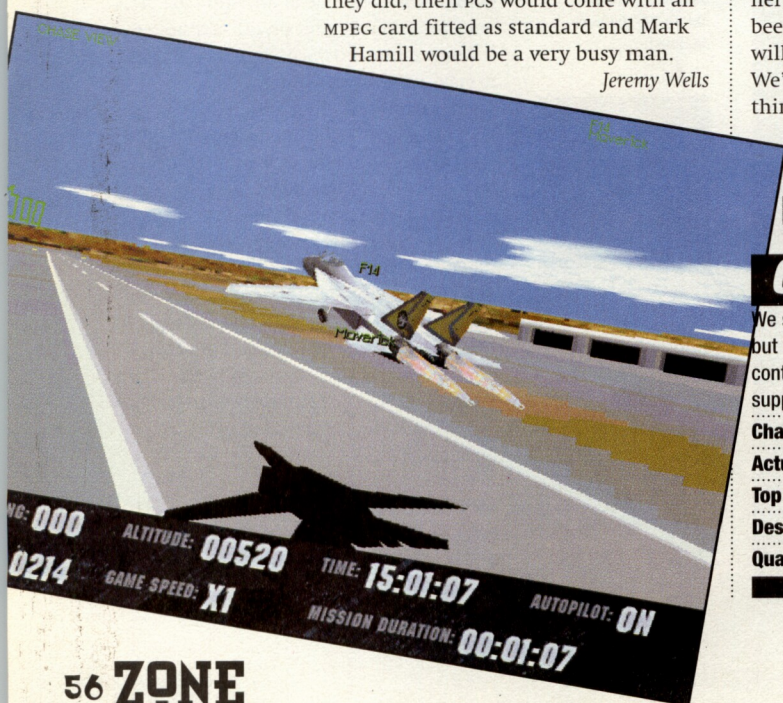
Resurrection: Rise 2

Tomcat Alley

Comix Zone

Rapid Assault

Thunderhawk 2



ZONE

reviews section



THE ZONE SCORING SYSTEM

90+ CLASSIC

Drop-dead brilliant, fab, skill, top, cool, excellent, almost as good as sex... etc, etc. Virtually flawless in all departments and oozing, yes oozing playability.

80-89 RECOMMENDED

Rather jolly super, but just not quite up to it in the sexual conquest stakes. More like a good snog really. One of those experiences that's more than adequate all round.

70-79

A good idea that's been reasonably well implemented, but not awfully original. A bit like someone coming up to you and saying "do you come here often?" The sort of game you'd go for if you were pissed... or a bit desperate.

60-69

Just above average, but absolutely nothing to write home and tell mum about. Adequate presentation, mediocre

gameplay and failing to make the grade in the originality stakes.

50-59

Averagely average Mr McAverage. Any game getting a score around this mark has absolutely nothing special about it whatsoever and will probably be forgotten almost immediately.

40-49

A just about bearable game which notches up a number of crippling flaws. The presentation ain't hot and the gameplay's worse.

20-39

Naff, and definitely worth avoiding at all costs.

20 and below PANTS

Absolute, complete and utter crap. It doesn't get much worse than this and therefore deserves the ultimate accolade... the PC Zone big, blue pants award for extreme naffness.

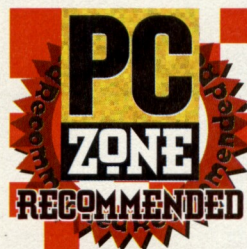
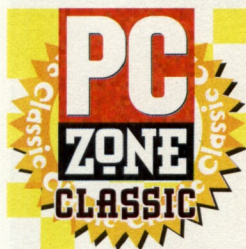
Thanks to

- Paul and Mark at GT Interactive
- Everyone at iD
- Steve McKeivitt at Gremlin
- All the people called Alison, Allison or Alyson at Interplay
- The guys with the alien-sounding names at Parallax

Reviews index

Normality	58
Kingdom O'Magic	63
C&C: The Covert Operations	67
Earthsiege 2	68
Speed Haste	70
PGA European Tour	72
ATF	76
S.T.O.R.M.	80
Spycraft	84
Virtual Snooker	87
Pick 'n' Mix	90

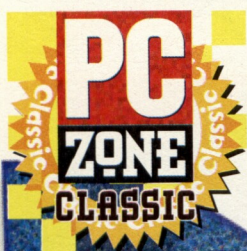
A round-up of the month's 'also-rans' including *Chronomaster*, *Bad Mojo* and some seriously weird stuff from Time Warner... *Dark Eye*, anybody? Bloody hell... weirdyville.



PC Zone use Gateway 2000 PCs exclusively 'cause they're absolutely fab. If you want any more information about Gateway 2000 machines, you can call them on this number:

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Normality

Patrick McCarthy and John Davison

reckon they're about as normal as they come.

Mind you, they've yet to catch on that "they" actually refers to the nearly extinct Malajusto tribe of Southern Borneo.

IT WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN. SOONER OR later, somebody was going to take the plunge. Ever since people started deconstructing the *Doom* code and working out how the programmers put it together, we've been given first-person perspective games by the bucketload – but the only adventure titles we've had in anything approaching that style have been pre-rendered (in other words, shite), and you haven't exactly been free to wander about your surroundings as the fancy takes you. In fact, it's usually quite the reverse: you have no choice in the matter at all. You go where the game decides you're going (or you fall into a pool of cyber-acid and die).

Work is freedom

But now we have *Normality*, a point-and-click adventure which is viewed from the first-person perspective, and which

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX2

Graphics: VGA, SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

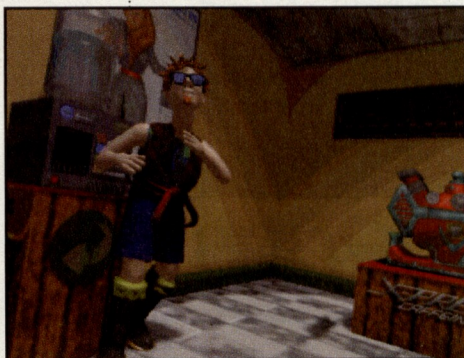
Controls: Keyboard, mouse

isn't pre-rendered. In fact, it features a smart 3D system called True 3D that gives you texture-mapped environments in which you can stroll about with all the freedom of a 'care in the community' victim who's searching for that perfect, gentle-faced victim to engage in tedious conversation about the problems they're having ironing their collection of London Underground memorabilia. (And yes, since you mention it, it

probably would be you. And it serves you right for being too well brought up to tell them to knob off.)

Oh all right then, you're not quite that free – you *are* free to walk about within each location, but you're not free to walk about from one location to the next. If you've completed a section of the game, or you need to go somewhere else, or whatever, you can either call up the map and click on

(Below) The FMV sequences (or GDVs as they're known – Gremlin Digital Video) are all extremely high quality and are sprinkled liberally throughout the game to illustrate points of interest.





where you want to go, or – if the location allows it – you can walk outside to the bus stop and catch a bus. It's a shame that the programmers couldn't have found some way of loading each location in such a manner that you could actually walk to it, like a sort of first-person perspective *Alone In The Dark* or *Ecstatica*, because it would have done a lot for the atmosphere. Still, we'd only complain about having to walk everywhere if they did. Unless they put everything you need really close together. Or used travellers.

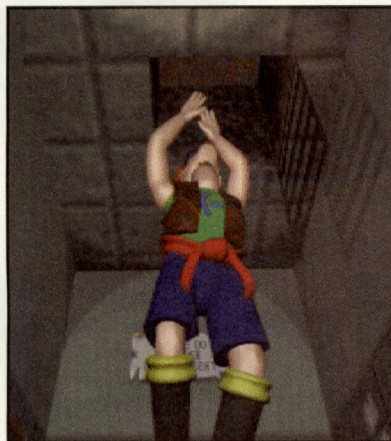
Background Information

Where the approach to the gameplay is fairly imaginative, the plot... well, isn't really. *Normality* is one of those gloom-laden futuristic jobbies that are all too feasible for comfort: the city in which your character lives – the delectable Neutropolis – has been turned into a very dull thing indeed, by a powerful organisation who have imposed strict standards of behaviour upon everyone else (no doubt while spending all their time with under-aged Filipinos and

amusingly-shaped fruit). Everything that might raise the pulse, the eyebrow, or any other part of the anatomy, is banned. The only thing on TV is Teletext (and even that's only got the business news), and Freddy Mercury tribute albums are the only music you're allowed to listen to. These people make Oliver Cromwell look like Liberace.

You are a free-thinking 'dyood', imprisoned in a Norm cell at the start of the game by the Norm Police (merely for the simple reason that you won't conform), a heavy mob used to ensure that everyone complies with the dictates of those in power.

You seem surprised at your arrest, by the way, but to my mind it's thoroughly justified. In a game where everyone else talks in a variety of regional English accents, you witter on in what is meant to be a cool and laid-back voice for hip gamers to identify with. In fact, it sounds like a cross between Greg Proops and an adenoidal California brat. Anyway, basically from there you have to escape, and do other stuff. You know, have an adventure.



(Above) Although the view is unique, many aspects of the game are very traditional – like the inventory screen for instance.



(Below) The True 3D engine is very versatile and many of the puzzles rely on the fact that it lets you look both up and down. Here you have to peer down through a hole to reach down and collect an object.



In perspective

Adventure games spring up all the time, and these days it seems that as far as quality goes they're all very similar. If you want a new challenge, this is one of the best offerings so far this year.

Normality

Kingdom O' Magic

Sam and Max

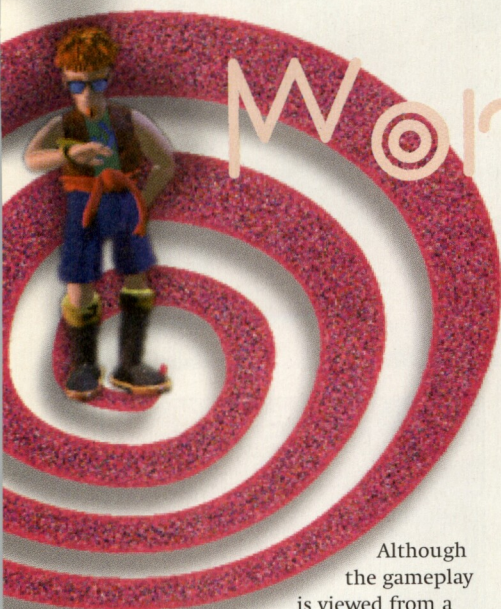
Discworld

The interface

For a ground-breaking adventure game, *Normality* has a distinctly ground-... er... reinforcing interface. Click the right mouse button, and up pops this 'voodoo doll' to perform all the functions for you. Very apt...

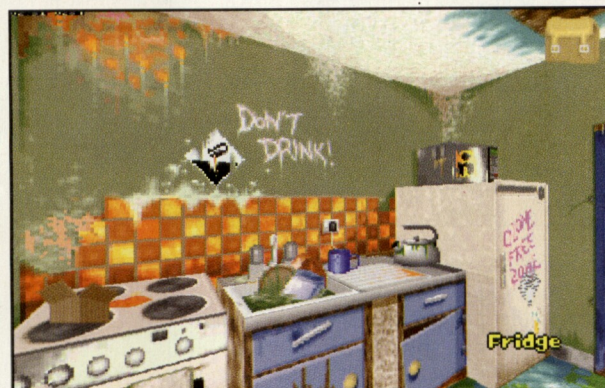
The hand with the grabber picks items up, the other hand uses them. The eyes look, the mouth talks, and so on. But given that everything else is viewed from a first-person perspective, it's a shame that Gremlin didn't come up with something a little more in keeping, or imaginative – even a row of icons at the top or bottom of the screen would be less intrusive and clumsy. As for the 'open' icon (a door in the voodoo doll's chest), its subtlety leaves me lost for words. It's either the work of a genius or a deranged idiot.

Normality



Although the gameplay is viewed from a first-person perspective

and you can look around all over the place including up and down, it's very traditional point-and-click: explore your surroundings; pick up everything you find because you'll probably need to combine it with something else later to solve a problem (and even if you don't, at least it looks like you're trying); talk to other characters; get hopelessly stuck; beat your head against the desk until your forehead looks like John Merrick's... you know the score. And all in all, it's damn good. The variety in the puzzles is up there with the best of them... there are some where you have



to stick things together to make useful contraptions, and there are others where you simply have to find something that a character needs (or in some cases doesn't). Everything is pretty much 'objective' based, though.

Once you've made it through the initial stages and escaped from your flat, you'll soon find a resistance movement fighting against the Norm Police and the tyrant who is ruling the city. The leader of the resistance will set a number of tasks for you that will take you all over the shop, and each of these overall objectives is made up of a number of interlinking mini-puzzlettes.



(Above) Believe it or not... this is vital to the plot.

(Above) The action all starts in your flat... and it's something that should be familiar to anyone who has lived in student accommodation.

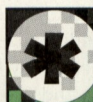
The in-game graphics are punctuated at regular intervals by cut-scenes – usually when you achieve a solution to one of the puzzles, but also when you perform certain actions or set off a chain of events. These rendered sequences are nicely done, and the look of the 'real' game manages to tie in neatly with the look of the rendered characters. To top it off, all the animations have been produced with the aid of Gremlin's rather clever motion capture system that records the movements of 'real' people so they can be integrated in with 3D Studio generated animations. The result is something far more realistic than anything you would see generated purely by a traditional 3D graphics system. We've mentioned the thing before – and we went into some detail when we talked about *Actua Soccer* – as all the players were animated using the same system.

Laugh? I nearly died...

The game's sizeable, and pretty good, too. It isn't easy, by any means – some of the puzzles have solutions obscure enough to please the most lateral-thinking of players... now you're waiting for a 'but', aren't you?

But (there you go) it isn't without its little foibles. As a comedy adventure, it isn't up there with the likes of *Sam And*

(Below left) For some reason, there's a camera crew in here.



Second Opinion

Normality is quite clearly having a crack at the big league, and has the Lucas and Sierra adventures very much in its sights. By turning the whole thing on its head and giving you a 3D environment, Gremlin have achieved something which I'm sure will be copied by many other developers. It may not be a totally new genre but it combines the best bits of 3D RPGs, like *Ultima Underworld*, with traditional point-and-clickers such as *Discworld* and *Day Of The Tentacle*.

Graphically the title is superb and the gameplay is very absorbing – if a little surreal in places. Like Patrick, I found the main character to be intensely annoying at times... not so much in what he does but in the way he talks. The game is full of Brummies, Scousers and every other kind of stereotype Brit... but the main character is an irritating yank.

On the whole though, it is a great game – and certainly one of the most enjoyable adventures to arrive in the past few months. It definitely gets the thumbs up over *Kingdom O'Magic*, in my book anyway.

John Davison



Score

90

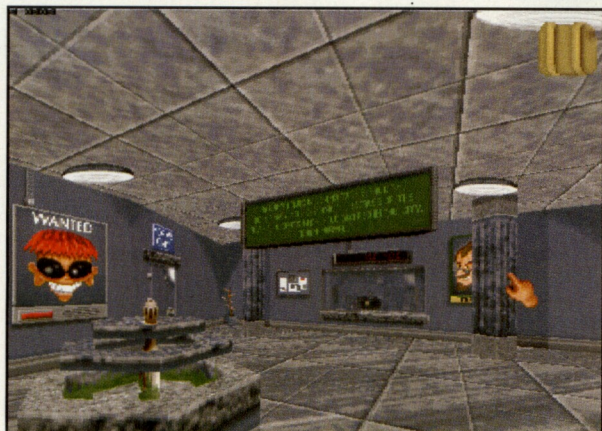
Ambitious, and worth a look.

Price: TBC **Release Date:** March
Publisher: Gremlin Interactive
Tel: 0114-275 3423

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Max, or even Discworld (if you find Terry Pratchett amusing, that is). It has its moments, and raises the odd chuckle but sometimes the dialogue really drags on. Often, you feel that you don't really need to listen to much of it, which is fine if it's entertaining anyway, but sometimes it's just a little bit tedious. **Z**

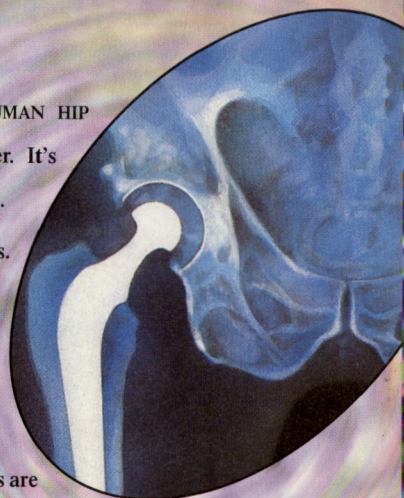
(Below) This is the Ordinary Outpost – a hive of Norm Police activity, and where the action will eventually take you.



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EXPECT

NO MERCY



18

WARNING

This game contains scenes of extreme violence which may be offensive to some audiences

Microforum

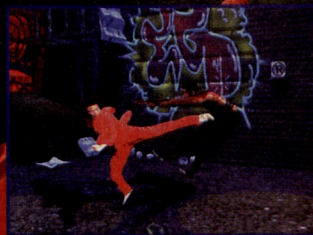
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Recommended – 486DX/66, 486DX-4/75, 486-4/100 or any Pentium based system,
16MB Ram, Accelerated Video card, Triple or Quad Speed CD Rom, Joystick.

All trademarks are acknowledged

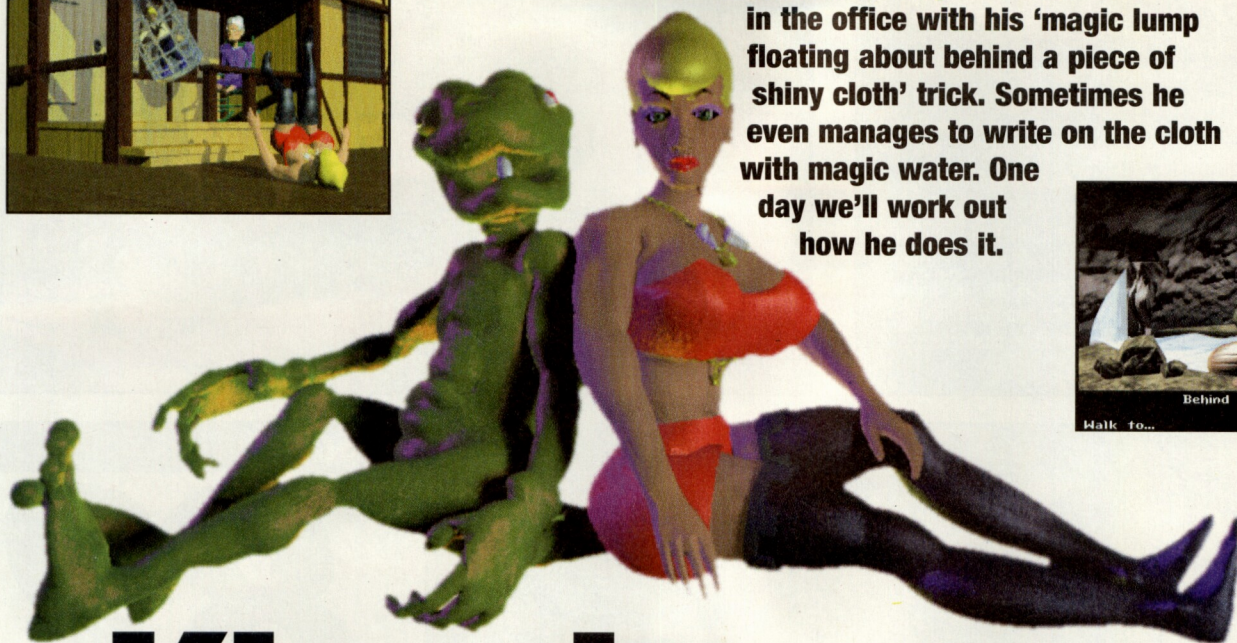
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Patrick McCarthy often entertains us in the office with his 'magic lump floating about behind a piece of shiny cloth' trick. Sometimes he even manages to write on the cloth with magic water. One day we'll work out how he does it.

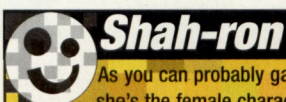


Kingdom O'Magic

WITH A CONFIDENT WINK AND A swift nudge to our collective ribs comes *Kingdom O'Magic*, "a comedy point-and-click adventure with an RPG engine running underneath". Somewhat unusually it gives you, it says here, six games in one. This is based on the fact that there are three different quests to embark upon, and two main characters with whom you can play through each quest. Just in case your maths isn't too good, the formula is: three quests x two characters = six games. But does it, though? Eh?

Two characters = two games?

This doesn't stand up particularly well under closer scrutiny; if you play the same situation in the same quest with different characters, you'll often find



Shah-ron

As you can probably gather, she's the female character option. She's physically less strong than the spindly-limbed male character (because she's a bird, right?). On the other hand, she's better at using magic. Eee, it's just like living in Japan. As you can also probably see, she has enormous breasts, a mini skirt that barely covers her buttocks and high-heeled thigh-length boots. This is so that we will all be turned-on by her. This version shows Shah-ron's knickers beneath her skirt when she bends over – in the earlier versions, she had no knickers on. They probably had to put the knickers on because they weren't sure what was supposed to be underneath.

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX/33

Graphics: VGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse

yourself repeating many conversations word for word. Obviously at other times, through necessity, the conversations will vary. Other characters can't, for example, make any allusions to the size of your male character's breasts, which forces the writers to come up with new dialogue at these points. And there are occasions when you'll have to alter your approach to situations with each character accordingly. The aim of each quest remains the same, though, and there are more similarities than differences.



Three quests = three games?

This almost scrapes it, although if the locations in one quest are also available in another (some aren't), many conversations are, again, identical – the one where you're trying to get a wig from the wig-maker springs to mind. You even get the same wacky interjections

(Above) Interface-wise the thing is pretty much up to date.

(Below) All of the characters in the game are rendered but they tend to look a bit 'lumpy.'



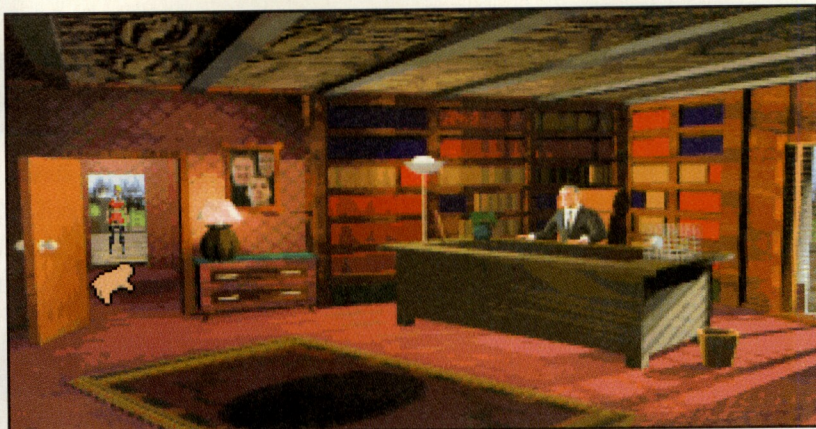


Thidney

The male (and somewhat repulsive) character option, for those who are so swimming in testosterone they simply can't imagine playing a female. His voice is provided by John Sessions, but before you start thinking along the lines of 'uh-huh, pretentious, incredibly pleased with his own jokes, anxious to stress to his audience how clever he is', I'll move on to Thidney... He's a wacky kinda guy, with a quip for every situation and an accent that alters so often in the mid-point of a line that you never actually work out what his real accent is supposed to be. (Perhaps he should do a Mike Yarwood and say, "And this is me," so that we know.) Anyway, despite the strange fact that he has arms like a supermodel, he's the physically stronger of the two characters you can use. Because he's a blerk, right?

(Above right) All of the scenery has been rendered in 3D Studio and looks quite unlike any other adventure game.

(Right) You are one ugly muthafu...



at the same point. So their formula doesn't exactly work. But then, since you get plenty to do without adding it up in this way, let's forget all about it.

Kitchen-sink drama

Kingdom O'Magic is unusual for a point-and-clicker, in that not just cut-scenes, but stock film footage has been added for comic effect. It can wear a bit thin, but given that the approach is basically everything-but-the-kitchen-sink humour, it will probably win you round.

The script, when it's not being used to portray minorities in a less-than-flattering light, also has its moments, and made me laugh on a number of occasions. There are some nice touches – the idea of the Gorgon's photo album was one that I particularly liked.

The game moves through day and night, with certain locations available at different times of the cycle. It's a nice idea in theory, but can mean waiting around while time passes – and the endlessly repeated night-falling, day-breaking 'joke' is guaranteed to drive you round the bend.

A dedicated follower of fashion

You sometimes feel that they're trying just a little too hard to latch onto some kind of trendiness, even down to using Perez Prado's *Guaglione* (aka That Music Off The Guinness Advert) in an intro sequence, and ladling on the *Pulp Fiction* references. The script is actually more entertaining when it stops trying to impress you with its cleverness – some of it is just downright peculiar. Speak to one particular elf, for example, and he'll say in a startlingly fey and high-pitched voice, "I live in the Forest, I have no debts whatsoever and I'm incredibly well-hung. Every day is a lovely day to me..." and wander off. And some of the fiercely menacing wraiths come out with unexpectedly comic lines if you speak to them in a certain way.

As for the RPG stuff, what it amounts to is that the NPG characters stroll about all over the place and have their own health and spell points (this can be a pain if you get something to give to one of them, and can't find the swine because they're wandering about so much, but that's the price you pay for an underlying RPG engine, I suppose).



Score

82

Pretty good. Worth a look. And other hackneyed phrases.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: SCI/Funsoft
Tel: 0171-585 3308

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Different races also have a healthy dislike for each other, so you'll often hear or see fights between them; you can find weapons to use on the buggers yourself if you get a bit tired of all the chatting and are sure they won't kick the shit out of you (which most of them will, given the opportunity). All in all, though, *Kingdom O'Magic* is essentially a solid game, well up to scratch. **Z**



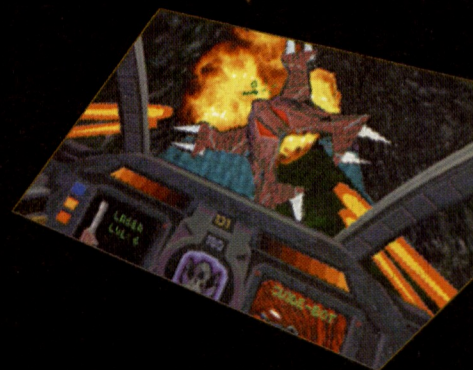
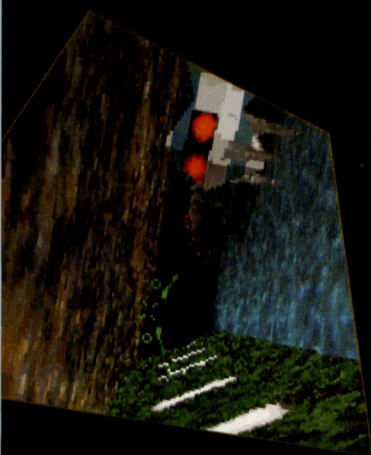
Stereotypes

It's only a game, and supposed to be funny and all that stuff, but it could do without the minority stereotypes. The Black King comes out with all the soul-brother type shit more usually associated with blaxploitation movies. The designers seem to think they can get away with it by sticking in references to Samuel L Jackson in *Pulp Fiction*, but there's a difference: in the film his was a strong character that you don't laugh at; this one is a buffoon. And the hairdresser is a camp homosexual. Apparently the designers tried to justify this by saying that all minorities come in for the same stick – they're not just picking on one. Don't the admirable Jim Davidson and Bernard Manning say the same thing? What rib-tickling fun.

DESCENT 2



You're going down again!



The world's greatest 360 degree 3D game is back...but this time it's even better. Strap yourself into the most successful mind-twisting action game ever developed. With 30 new levels of complex mines, six entirely different worlds, and a team of highly intelligent new robot enemies, Descent 2 is guaranteed to give you hours of vertigo madness. But, beware, the deeper you go, the darker it gets.

"Descent 2 is the rock 'n' roll 3D game for 1996." PC Format.

Available on PC CD ROM

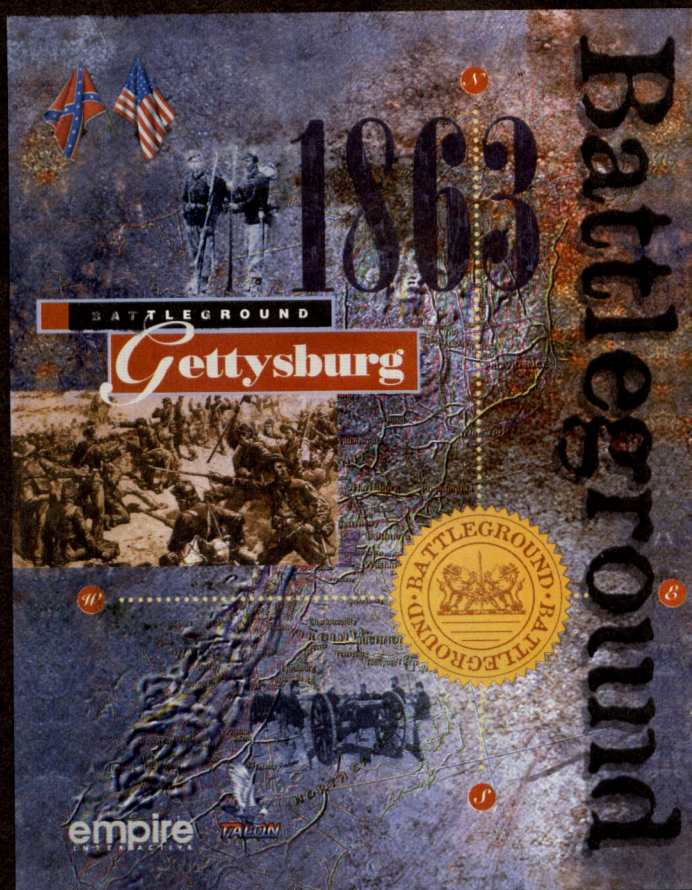
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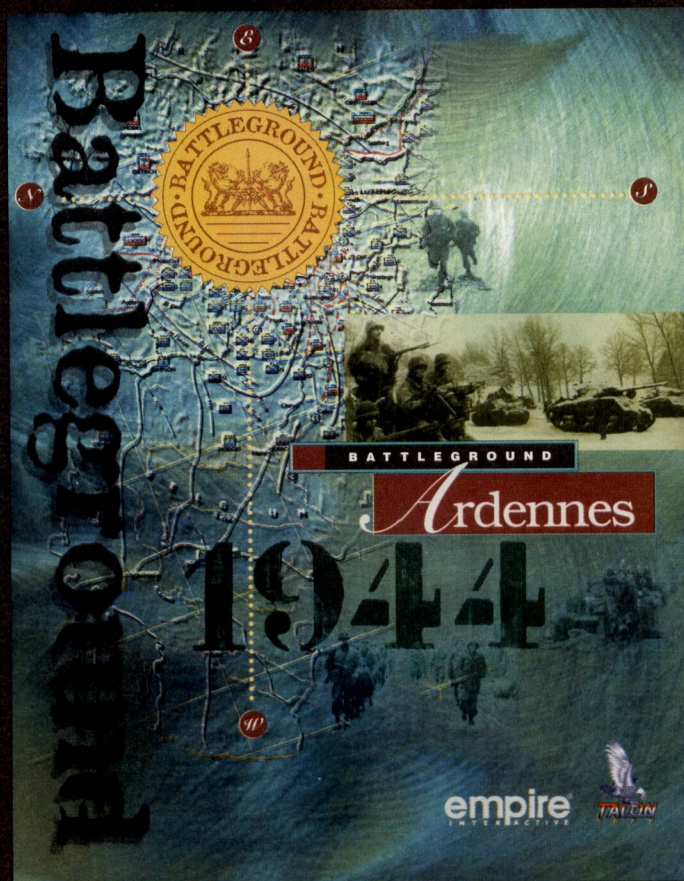
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Battle of Gettysburg



BATTLEGROUND SERIES:
Easy to play... difficult to master



*For three fateful days,
the future of a nation
hangs in the balance...*

CGW 5 stars

"A grand tactical, turn-based wargame...it provides the most dramatic and realistic depiction of the battlefield. Gettysburg is an outstanding game."

PC Gamer Editors choice

"...will turn a novice gamer into an expert in short order...the best of both traditional styles of wargaming...sheer playability...enthralling."

PC Zone

"If you're looking for a challenging strategy game that's easy on the eye, then Battleground: Gettysburg fits the bill nicely."



*The fate of Europe
turns on the Battle
of the Bulge...*

PC Zone

Recommended

"Seeing a game come to life like this really is pretty impressive... WOW! This is good"

PC Gamer

"Challenging and entertaining enough to keep you at the frontline... Ardennes hangs together well, and is immense fun to play."

Strategy Plus

"Ardennes is a fine initial offering from Talonsoft and a blast to play. Excellent graphics and animation, and sheer fun that drew in grizzled campaigners as well as green novices."



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Tel: 0181 343 9143. Fax: 0181 343 7447.
Email: empire@eitech.demon.co.uk
World Wide Web Page: <http://www.empire.co.uk>



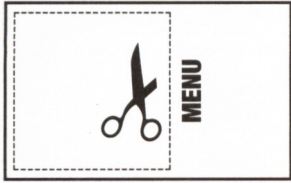
als with FMV footage, MicroProse's *Top Gun* was more than worthy of the Classic award we gave it last month. As with all flight sims, there are plenty of buttons you have to press so here's another handy overlay...

Q	CYCLE PIP OBJECTS	(NUMERIC PAD) DECREASE THROTTLE
T	CYCLE VIRTUAL TARGETS	(NUMERIC PAD) INCREASE THROTTLE
/	DECREASE AB	(NUMERIC PAD) AUTO LEVEL

COCKPIT VIEW	FULL COCKPIT VIEW	LEFT VIEW	RIGHT VIEW
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OUTSIDE VIEW	CHASE VIEW	ENEMY TRACK	VIRTUAL COCKPIT
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HUD ONLY VIEW			
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1	CLOUDS ON/OFF
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2	TERRAIN ON/OFF
---	----------------

4	LABELS ON/OFF
---	---------------

5	INDICATOR ON/OFF
---	------------------

7	CHANGE 1ST HUD COLOUR
---	-----------------------

8	CHANGE 2ND HUD COLOUR
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0	AUTO-THROTTLE ON/OFF
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=	INCREASE THROTTLE
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-	DECREASE THROTTLE
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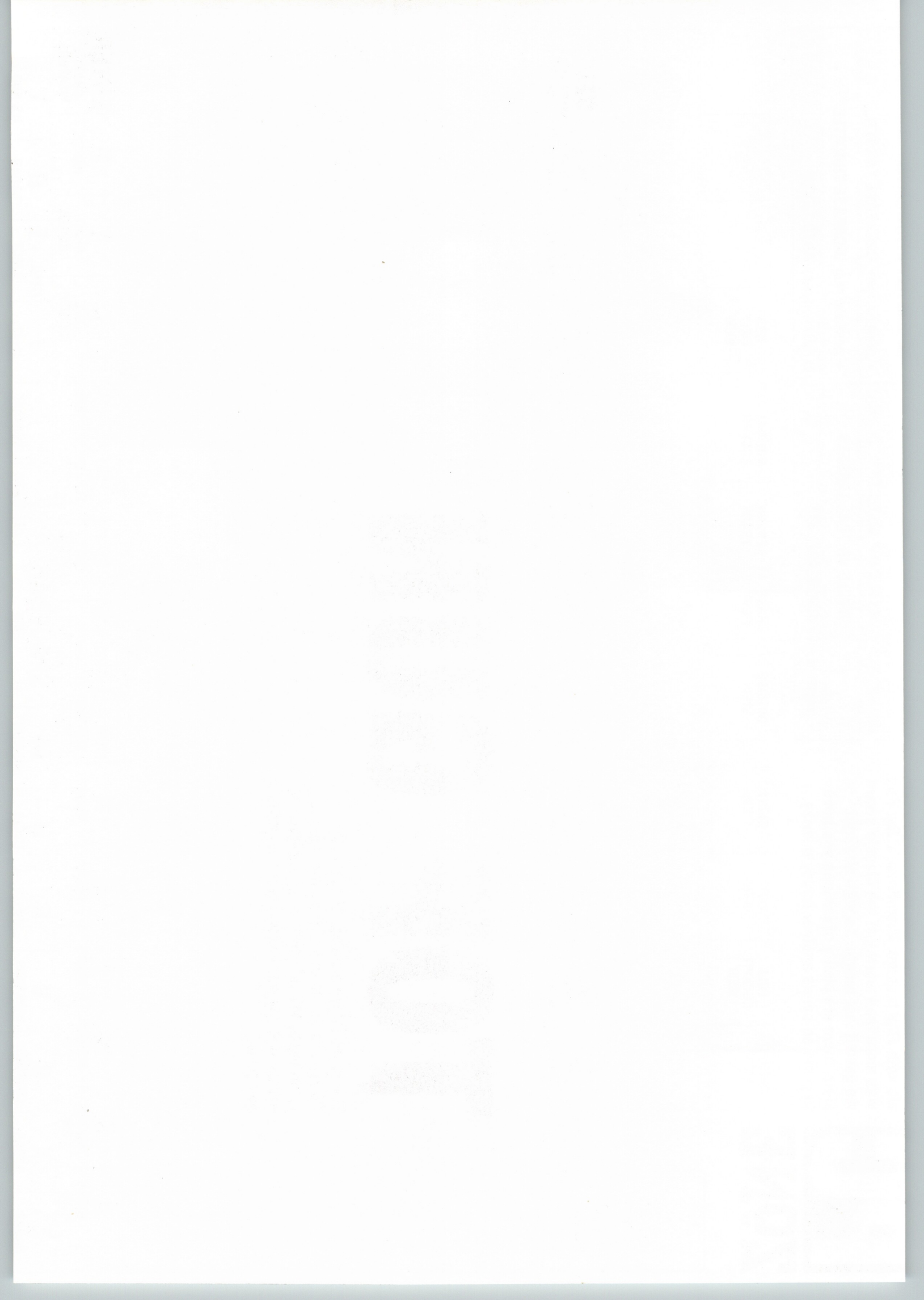
DEL	CHANGE HUD MODE
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TOP GUN

This keyboard template has been created by PC Zone for purchasers of the game *Top Gun*, published by MicroProse. It is not approved or endorsed in any way by MicroProse. All rights recognised.



A	STATUS PIP	S	WORLD PIP	F	FLAPS	G	GEAR	H	HOOK	CTRL + J	JETTISON STORES	CTRL + K	RADIO SILENCE	L	CAT LAUNCH	;	FLARES	'	CHAFF	/	LEFT RUDDER	J	RIGHT RUDDER	P	PAUSE	ENTER	CHANGE WEAPONS
Z	RADAR	X	RADAR	C	COMPRESS	V	COMPRESS	B	SPEED	N	CYCLE	M	MISSION	SPACEBAR	FIRE	,	DECREASE	.	INCREASE	/	CHAT	CTRL + E	EJECT	R	RADAR	\	ILS HUD



C&C: The Covert Operations

So you've finished *Command & Conquer* and you think you're really hard, eh? Well, that's what **Pete Hawley** thought until he tackled the new mission disc from our friends at Westwood.



OVER RECENT MONTHS COMMANDING and conquering into the wee small hours became something of an international past time for PC users across the globe. A sales figure of 500,000 copies of the game throughout Europe alone isn't bad for a start, but now there's another assault on our desktops in the form of a brand new mission disc: *The Covert Operations*. And to continue in the tradition of mission discs, it's absolutely rock hard.

Mission discs are a very strange breed of software indeed... I mean, what are they exactly? Where do they actually come from? And why are they always so incredibly difficult? Taking a quick look back through the PC's chequered history, a few titles spring to mind that leave me with the lasting impression that mission discs are released for one of only three reasons:

(Above) Right! I'll plop these tanks here while my commando leaps aboard the Chinook to go and cause some grief on the other side of the river.



(Left) Nod gits are still slaughtering innocents in this mission disc!

(Below) It's slightly disappointing that the cut-scenes haven't changed.



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX2

Graphics: VGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse

Note: You will need a copy of *Command & Conquer* before you can use this disc

1) They act as an appetiser before the actual sequel arrives, keeping game junkies happy in the interim period.

2) They are an attempt to cash in on the success of the original by slapping a few extra levels on a CD, although the same game engine has been used and there are no new features.

3) A sick joke created by programmers for game-testers and people who work at the developers who are now bored with playing the original for 16 hours a day, and need a new challenge.

Does anyone remember *The American Revolt*, the mission disk for *Syndicate*? If you are familiar with it, you'll understand exactly where I'm coming from.

New bits

All the new missions and network levels are listed (eight GDI, seven NOD, ten network), and simply clicking on one launches the mission intro animation; there are no new ones, I'm afraid. This initial menu system annoyed me. There isn't any campaign or plot to follow with the new levels, it's just a case of fighting through them one at a time. This is all very well and does mean you get to see all the new levels without having to play them, but, one of the reasons I enjoyed the original so much was because of the immense sense of atmosphere and realism that built as you battled towards your final goal.

Another irritation is that glaring errors in the artificial intelligence are



still in evidence; network play still suffers in this respect too. And then there are the harvesters that wander aimlessly, despite being next to the largest crop of Tiberium in the known galaxy, and spending pots of cash on satellite strikes which then do about as much damage as an angry spider with a head-ache. It's still best to save your money and build an enormous battalion of tanks and steam in from two sides. Ho-hum!

Niggling criticisms aside, *C&C* stands as one of the finest games of last year, and the addition of new levels can only be a good thing. *The Covert Operations* is an excellent addition to any *Command & Conquer* General's software collection, and if you are an avid fan I'd strongly recommend you dip into your war fund and purchase it immediately. If you're a casual *C&C* dabbler then be warned - it's harder than eight hard things all fighting it out to find out who's the hardest; and all getting hammered by something even harder with its arm tied behind its back. Nuff said! **Z**

Score

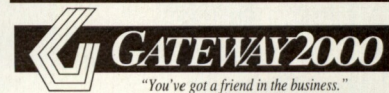
84

A great addition to the original but bloody hard.

Price: £14.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Virgin

Tel: 0171-368 2255



Metaltech Earthsiege 2

PC
ZONE
CLASSIC

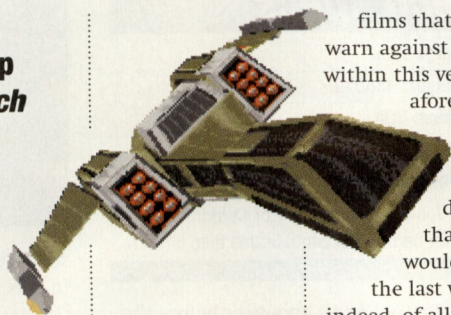
It's the
follow-up
to *Metaltech*

Earthsiege. It has a blindingly original title. And it's inspired Patrick McCarthy to come up with an equally original introduction.

FOR THOSE OF YOU UNFAMILIAR WITH the concept behind the *Metaltech* games, it goes like this: Stupid Scientists Of The Future (SSOTF) create an advanced form of artificial intelligence with neural connectors and a biological model.

Well done, SSOTF. SSOTF now have a choice. Do they combine this advanced artificial intelligence with cute little robots who could be used to do the washing-up, empty shit from bedpans and write scripts for *Goodnight Sweetheart*, thus relieving much of the grinding toil of existence for poorly-paid human drudges? Or do they combine the artificial intelligence with powerful weapons of destruction, ever mindful of the fact that they're likely to get a far larger government research grant? No contest.

Despite the presence in the local library of a number of historical sci-fi novels, computer games and



(Below) You and your friends decide what outfits you'll wear to the party...



(Right) Blimey, that new underarm deodorant's powerful stuff.

films that take great pains to warn against the perils lying dormant within this very area, they stick the aforementioned intelligence into an armour-plated robot the size of Tooting, then equip it with more death-dealing weaponry than a government minister would sell to Iraq. And that's the last we see of the SSOTF or, indeed, of all the cute little hopping, crawling, swimming things on earth - bunnies, pussy cats, ants, worms... er, jellied eels - and most of humanity, too. Because the newly-created cybrid decides, within approximately 0.0001 seconds of being switched on, that no, it isn't going to empty the bedpans and Hoover the dog, it's going to build some friends and kill every living thing on

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Joystick, mouse, keyboard

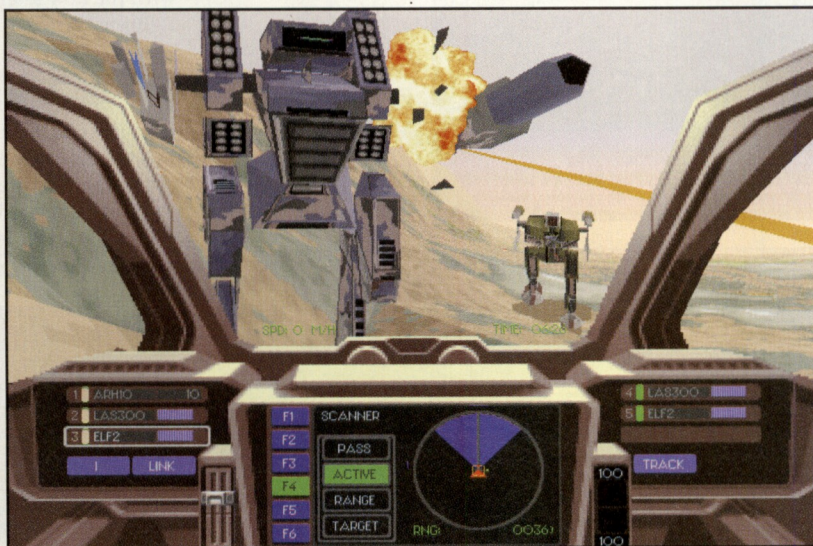
Note: Windows 95 required

the planet. Basically, if something's body isn't made of tempered steel, it's now an endangered species. You, as someone who is keen to carry on living, decide to join the small band of remaining humans who are fighting against these '80s-style aluminium over-achievers.

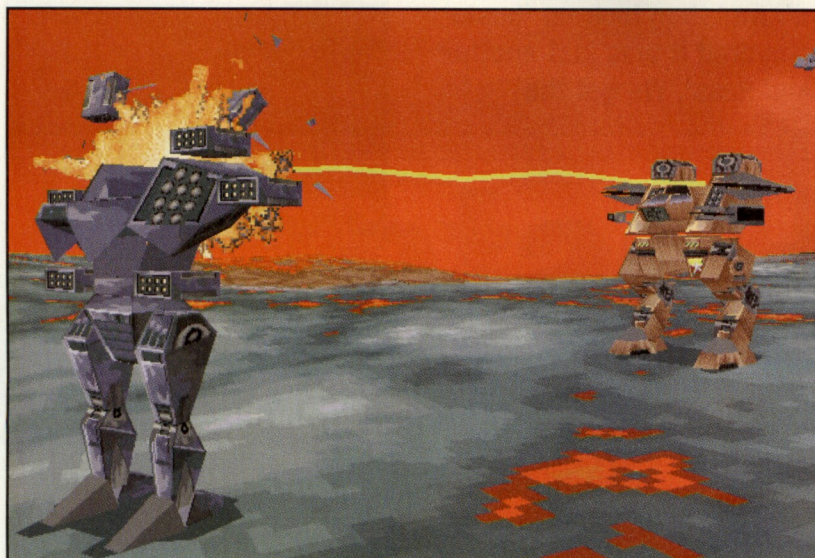
Plot development?

It's exactly the same set-up and has a plot that's identical to the first game. Apart from a token 'and now they're back, for one final try at wiping out everyone whose testicles don't clank when they walk' type thing. And basically, the whole structure of the game is the same too. Despite, presumably, having defeated the pesky cybrids at the end of the last game (or else we wouldn't even be here for the follow-up) you still have to start from scratch again with one poxy little robot.

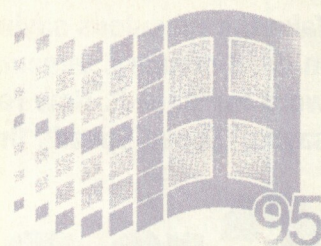
The previous game's tenet was that the surviving humans were fighting a guerilla war with little or no technology of their own, using spare parts salvaged



(Left) So, my foot looks like a hoof, does it? Well suck on this...



(Left) Barry falls asleep on the firing button again, and another friendship is placed under strain.



A brief history of Mech-based games

MechWarrior 1 was shite. *Metaltech Earthsiege 1* had crappy flat landscapes and was a difficult slog, but stuff fell over nicely and you could have invulnerability-based fun with one-off missions; *MechWarrior 2* featured two sides who were evenly matched, but Mechs that stayed standing up and carried on fighting on one leg. Now this one has better graphics and proper landscapes but still the same level of difficulty.

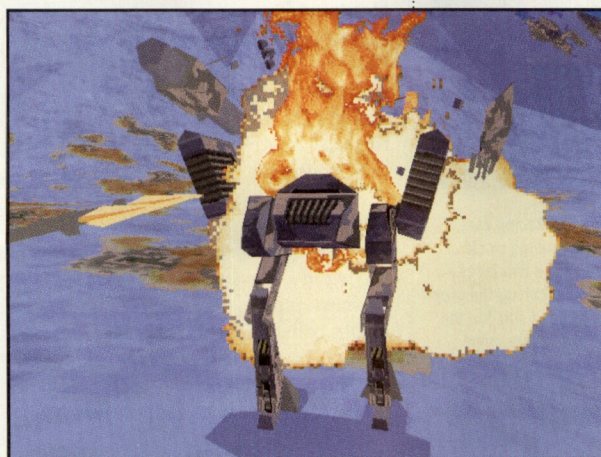
from the cybrids they blew up to learn about and create new HERCs, a bit like a futuristic Womble. There's a strong resource management element – 'salvage' works like an abstract currency rather than consisting of actual bits of machinery, and you use it to repair any existing HERCs as well as build new ones.

But, since you start the game in exactly the same situation as the first one, one can only assume that after beating back the cybrid forces last time, you went straight out and trashed all the stuff you'd built. (Saying, "There! Beat them! We won't be seeing *their* like again, I'll warrant. And we certainly won't be needing *this* old thing!... I'll use the parts to make a much-needed hoover, hairdryer and cigar lighter.")

The poxy little robot you start off with really is poxy. The cybrids you'll be fighting against make your HERC look like the robot that does the housework in *The Jetsons*, so that the game becomes pretty hard fairly early on, and you need as much salvage as you can get – but you can opt for the customisable one-off missions, but basically the career mode is difficult. You'll find you set off on a seek and destroy mission with your cute little HERC with its three weapons, walk over a hill and see nine heavily-armed office blocks waiting for you.

Legs... why?

The one difference between this game and the previous one is in the landscape and graphical presentation. For example, instead of still pictures showing people standing around while you read your



orders from the text, you get little FMV-movies of a bloke telling you your orders, *then* read all the other details. In the first version, you were fighting on what appeared to be a gigantic billiard table that had been liberally sprinkled with pyramids. These were 'hills'. You weren't allowed to walk on them – they were for hiding behind when you'd had the shit blown out of you and six Pitbull cybrids were still on your trail. Technology has moved on, though, and this version looks rather splendid, with gorgeous rolling hills and dales and everything in glorious hi-res. Alright, so it's understandably post-nuclear in aspect, but it's also strangely reminiscent of Yorkshire. You wouldn't want to live there (again, rather like Yorkshire) but all you need is a couple of blokes with their arms up cows' arses and it would be like an episode of *All Creatures Great And Small*.

What I'm saying is that at least now we have proper hills, there's some kind of excuse for giving these robot tank things legs. In the first version, a set of casters would have done the job just as well, and at least you wouldn't have continually fallen over when your legs were shot away from under you.

(Above) "Just watch me everyone, I can light my fa—...oops!" said Colin.

Score

90

Still difficult, but it looks better than the original.

Price: £44.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Sierra

Tel: 01734 303322

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

But even in this version, the Stupid Scientists Of The Future would have to admit that tank tracks would do the job just as well.

There's not really a lot more to say. If you've seen and liked the first one, you'll like this, because it's exactly the same. Basically, it's less of a sequel, and more of an 'exactly the same game, but the technology now allows it to look rather better'. There'll be a short term for that one day. Oh. And I forgot to mention that it's Windows 95 only.

(How conscientious – Ed.) **Z**



Wombles theme: The Earthsiege version

Underground, overground HERCling free
Those enemy Mechs scare the shit out of me
We're making good use of the things that we find
Bloody great guns and proximity mines...
(I'm not sure the original wombles speak like that – Ed.)

Take the ridiculous saying 'more haste less speed'. And then look up 'haste' in the dictionary. **Duncan MacDonald** did, and discovered it was just another word for 'speed'. Now remove the words 'more' and 'less'. We get the saying 'Speed Speed'. Or 'Haste Speed'. Er...

Speed Haste



SORRY FOLKS, BUT I'M IN A BIT OF A dilemma here. What can I tell you about *Speed Haste* that you don't already know? (Apart from the fact that it's a stupid name.) After all, the shareware version was on last month's cover CD... and it worked on 4 meg 486s, so you'll have experienced the thing even if you've got a less-than-ninja PC. See my predicament? What I have to do is work out a way in which I can involve you in this review on an interactive level... and the only way I can see my way round it is to host a multiple choice exam doofer. I'll ask the questions (naturally), and you simply have to go for a top score: the correct answers are at the bottom of the page. (Oh, and if you're in the 'Floppy Drive Only' minority or you're a new reader, you can play too, but you'll have to guess.)

Question 1

The *Speed Haste* options screen is unlike any that's ever been seen before... all the choices have a completely new and original 'twist' to them.



(Above) Racing cars have strange clocks... they have two faces, one containing the grey hour hand and one the yellow minute hand. As you can see, it's currently five to eight, I'm in third gear, and I'm in ninth position.

(Below) I wanted to get an impressive shot of the Nascar sliding its back out. Unfortunately in the period between letting go of the joystick and pressing CTRL, ALT and T (the screen grabbing keys) the car had sort of 'righted' itself. (Boo!)

(Below right) So I tried again, only this time round I was too early. What a clot, eh?

A: Yes, I couldn't believe it - it's amazing!
B: Eh? It's just the usual championship, single race or practice stuff. But the wealth of multi-player options is good.

Question 2

Only one car is available, and it's an Austin Maestro.

A: Don't be silly. You can choose either Nascars or F1 cars - and there are six of each to choose from. Manual or automatic. The F1 cars are easier than the Nascars, though.

B: Sounds okay to me, Maestros are cool!

Question 3

The *Speed Haste* automobiles, whether you're playing in F1 mode or Nascar mode, handle unrealistically.

A: Oh, come on... they may be a tad iffy, but at least you can put them sideways and stuff. Especially the stock cars.

B: You kid not. They're all on rails.

Question 4

The opponents' AI is top notch.

A: So how come they kept driving into the back of me?

B: It's sufficient for arcade frolics. Lighten up.

Question 5

The eight tracks are superbly detailed, and the sense of speed is phenomenal, whether you use the in-car view or either of the Ridge Racer behind-car views.

A: Whoah! How about it looks okayish... and also that the sense of speed isn't particularly amazing whatever viewpoint you adopt.

B: What do you mean, eight tracks? There are only two. And your speed never seems to get above 20 mph. The graphics, however, are superb at times.

Question 6

Speed Haste will keep you gripped for months. It's hyper addictive, and new



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX/33

Graphics: VGA, SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, joystick

challenges appear all the time.

A: Are you taking the piss or what?

B: I assume you're joking. Still, it's way better than *Virtual Karts*, eh?

Question 7

At just under 30 quid, *Speed Haste* is the best value game in the entire world.

A: The shareware version was pretty good value, I'll admit, but...

B: 30 quid would get me pissed for an entire weekend...

C: I own a 486 with 4 megs of RAM. I need all the games I can get. I welcome *Speed Haste* with open arms... even if I do have to lose some of the not-overly-impressive-in-the-first-place visuals.

Answers

(1) B; (2) A; (3) A; (4) A and B; (5) A; (6) B; (7) A, B and C.

Yeah okay, so I admit there was more than one answer to some of the questions, but we like to keep you on your toes. **Z**

Score

79

It's not a no-hoper by any means, but it's not particularly fab either.

Price: £29.99 Release Date: Out Now

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Tel: 01753 549442



GATEWAY2000

"You've got a friend in the business."

DON'T GAMBLE ON

QUALITY

"It's one of those
games you can
just keep playing
& playing"
PC POWER
80%

"Best strategy
game 1994"
PC GAMER
(US)



BreakThru!

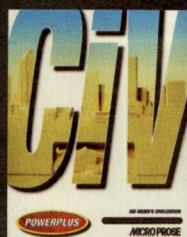
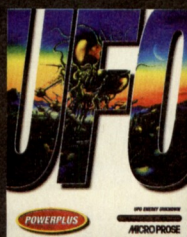
UFO

Civilization

"Overall game of
the year"
COMPUTER
GAMING
WORLD

USE MORE POWER

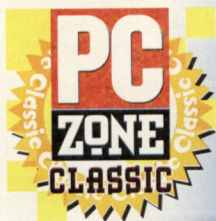
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MICRO PROSE



PGA European Tour

We wanted **Jeremy Wells** to take his time and set up a 'fore-play' joke in this intro, but he just couldn't be bothered. "They're predictable and unfunny," he moaned. If you think that's bad, wait 'til you see his copy...

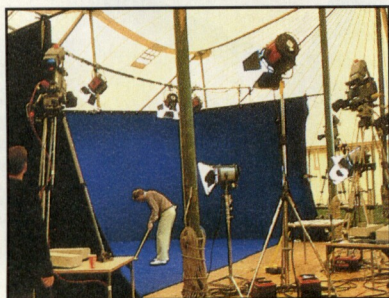
(Above) This will look very familiar to those of you who own *PGA Tour '96*. Relish in the comfort of familiarity or say 'Pah!' and turn away in disgust – the choice is yours.

(Right) Each European golfing 'star' was filmed against a blue screen and then cut into the game using very complicated and sophisticated tomfoolery by men with very long beards and greasy hair.

(Below) *PGA European Tour* is an improvement over the previous game, albeit very slightly. Not only does it look less flat, but Intelligent Games have improved the flight of the ball and tidied up the trees. It also runs much quicker.

PGA TOUR '96 SCORED A WHOPPING 94 percent when we reviewed it way back in November. Not only did it sport drop-dead gorgeous graphics as well as a very user-friendly interface (phew), but it introduced the infamous 'waggle' feature and two quite splendid new courses – TPC at Avenal, and Spyglass Hill. In fact the only fly in the ointment/black crisp in the packet/nice table, but too near the kitchen, was that it was full of Americans.

Not the type of Yank who talks really loud, mispronounces every syllable and wears garish shirts, but the kind who thinks that when the photographer says "Cheese" they should make like one of the Brady Bunch and pull an expression akin to those found in Estate Agents Year Books. Most had a pretty hot swing



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX/66
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles
Controls: Mouse, keyboard

The Spanish Bay Course Disk

As well as releasing *PGA European Tour*, EA Sports have also just released a new course disk for use with *PGA Tour '96*. This features the lush Californian 'links-like' Spanish Bay course, complete with crashing surf and singing gulls. Unlike *PGA European Tour* you still get the 'Spike-like' whispering commentary, which in itself is worth the £19.99 they're asking for the extra course disk. Whatta bargain, eh?

however, and would whip your bottom as soon as look at you. For the die-hard Yanko-phile the only real enjoyment was playing as them, but doing your utmost to make them miss the easiest of shots... then you could have the pleasure of watching them squirm at their hopeless ineptitude – sheer golfing bliss.

New and improved?

Well, not quite... it's more like 'new and the same as before', except that it's now chock-full of European golfers and there are three new courses to choose from: Wentworth, Gut Kaden (Germany) and last but not least, The K Club (Ireland). And not a Yank in sight.

PGA European Tour still looks gorgeous, it plays extremely well and the presentation is, of course, immaculate. There's FMV footage of each course, 'glowing' profiles of the individual players, lots of cheesy music, 'waggle', nice fly-bys of each hole, PIPs aplenty – and this time round it even features a rather staid commentary by Peter Allis.

Apart from the new commentary however, it's pretty much business as usual. Sure you can play as or against Bernard Langer or Monty (sadly there's no Seve or Faldo – they have their own separate licenses) and there's three new courses to hack around, but that really is it. *PGA European Tour* is a full-price, standalone product, so if you already own *PGA Tour '96* you probably won't want to fork out another forty odd quid on what is basically the same game,

especially when EA Sports have also just released a course disk for *PGA Tour '96* known as Spanish Bay for around half the price (see our panel above).

Question time...

Bearing all this in mind, it's really a question of asking yourself how much you love playing PGA. If you already own *PGA Tour '96* your money might be better spent on the course disk (unless you really and truly can't abide the bloody Americans). On the other hand, if you're looking for a new, feature-packed golf game, then *PGA European Tour* must come highly recommended. **Z**

Score

94

Take 10 off the score if you already own *PGA Tour '96*.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: EA Sports
Tel: 01753 549442

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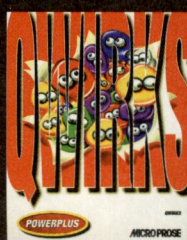
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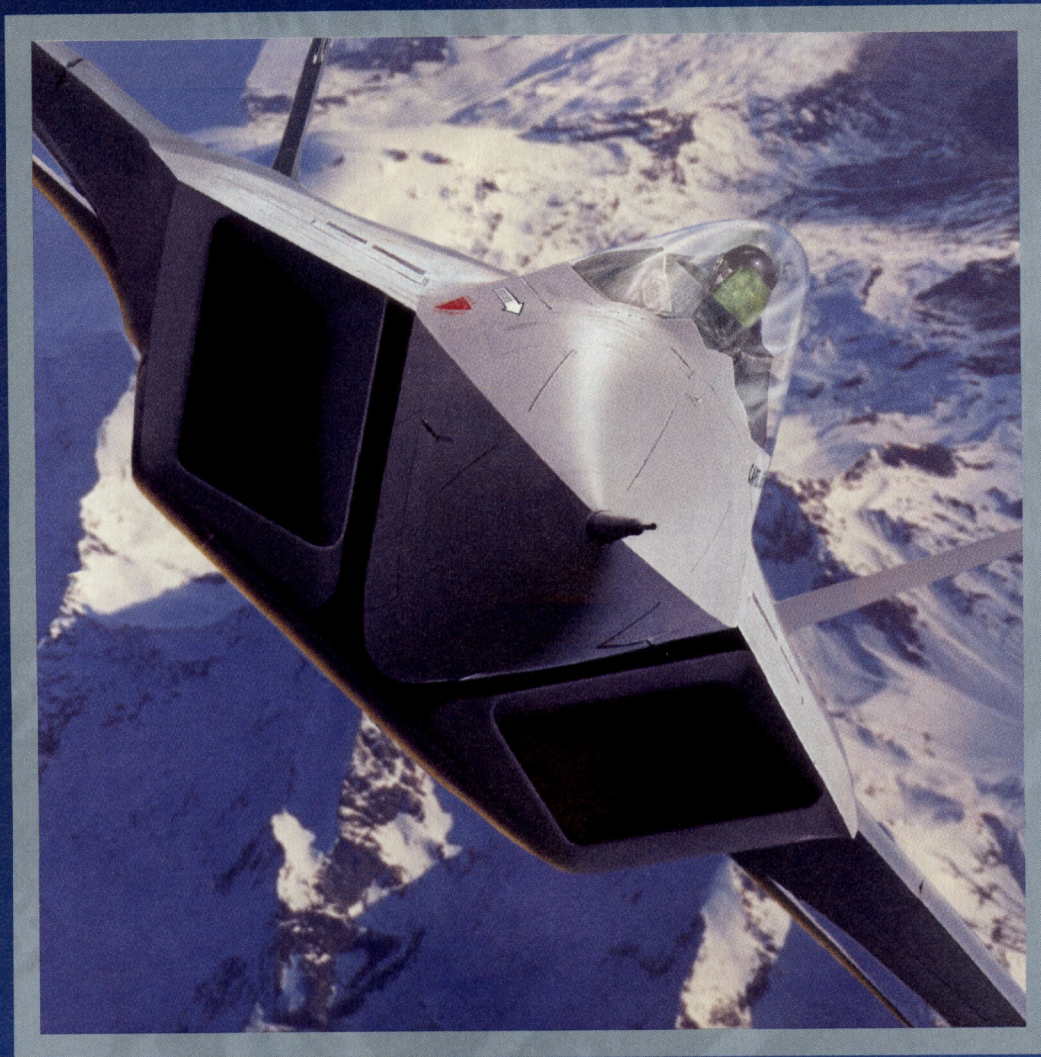
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THE X-22 AS SEEN BY A BOGIE



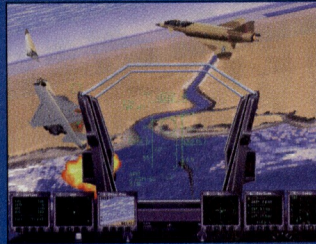
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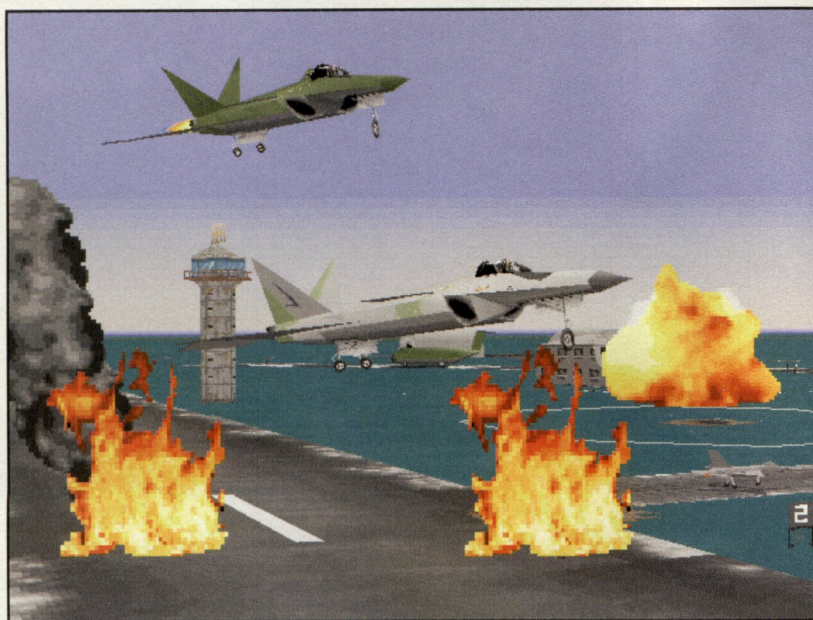
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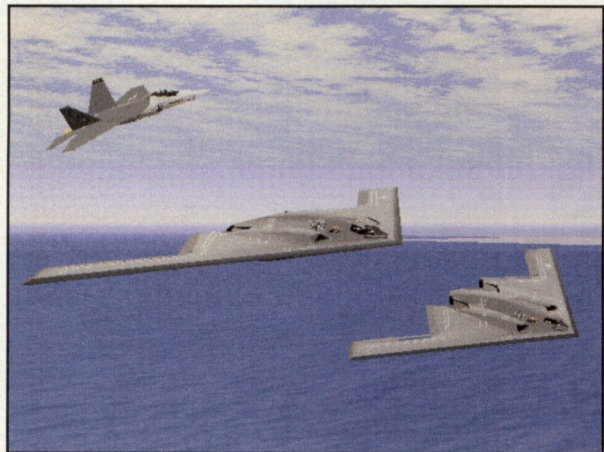
ELECTRONIC ARTS®



(Above) Kevin takes off in a huff and leaves the ground crew with one or two problems. "That'll teach them to put go-faster stripes on my plane," he explained.

(Right) Bob and Barry decide to take out another '70s-look aerodrome – "That'll give them an excuse to redecorate," smiled Bob.

(Below) Simon wasn't like the other planes at the base. He had much smaller wings and couldn't fly as high. This worried him immensely.



ATF

PC
Classic
ZONE
CLASSIC

When Duncan MacDonald can't think of an intro, he phones up his relatives and asks for suggestions. This month it's the turn of his hard of hearing nan: "What? What was that? Who's that? Speak up? Eighty what? Eh? Eighty F? Who's that?"



PART ONE: EXCITEMENT... When I was given *ATF* to review I was told that it was bound to be the most brilliant flight sim in the entire multiverse, and I had no reason to doubt this – after all, everyone in the office was jumping up and down shouting "Hip hip hooray!". A bevy of exotic dancers had been brought in for the occasion. Bunting had been put up. Flags! Balloons! Glittery ribbons! There were trays of posh 'snacks' scattered about, too, and the champagne was flowing like nobody's business. Pa-aarty!

I exaggerate, of course, but you get the drift: I was handed the *ATF* CD and assured that I would soon be in seventh heaven. So I dashed across the room and plugged a Flightstick Pro into the back of the ludicrously tall office P133. With shaking hands (heart rate at 158 BPM) I placed the disc into the drawer. It seemed to take forever to close. Come on...

Installing...

Install. Install. Install. Come on, come on. Yes, I would like ninja-scopic sound thank you (click). No, I don't want low-res, I want that one (click). Yes (click). Yes (click). Yes (click). Pause. Whirr. Pause. Whirr. Come on you bastard,

come on! Whirr, Whirr. Whirr, Whirr. Flashy intro starts. (It plays for 1.0394 seconds before I press the space-bar.) Whirr, Whirr. Whirr, whirr. The options screen appears. Yippy-de-yee!

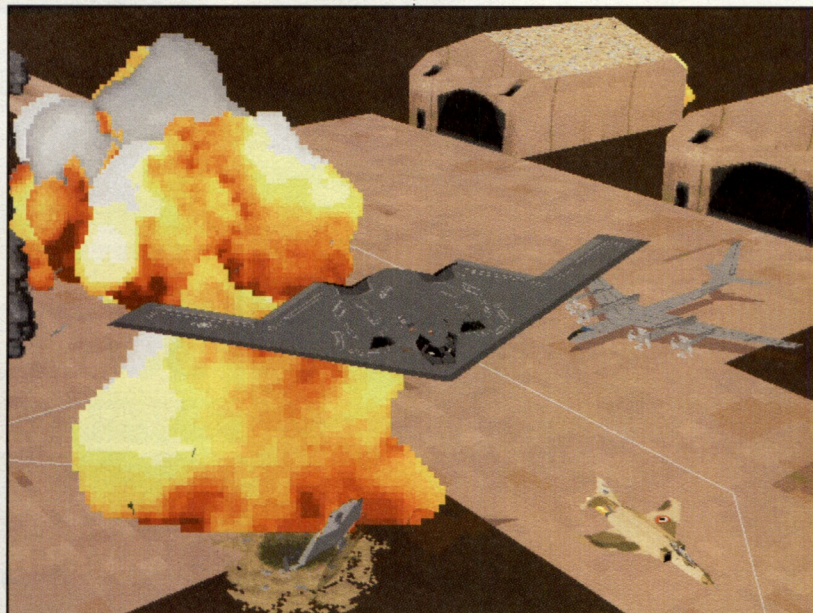
Quick, quick, quick (1)...

So where's the Quickstart? Doesn't seem to be one. I scan the on-screen list: play single mission; create quick mission; create pro mission; replay last mission; aircraft reference; other vehicle information; start campaign; load campaign; view pilot records. I decide (incorrectly, as it turns out) that the quickest in-road is going to be the top one, 'play single mission'. (Click.) Oh no, loads of text. I don't care what the mission is yet. (Click.) Oh, wow, loads of little planes in a hangar, viewed from above. Neat. There are about 15 of them. I click on one. 'XF-32 ASTVOL', it says in the text box. I click on the Hercules Transport plane. 'AC-130U Spectre', I'm informed. Oh well, it looks like a bloody Hercules

from this angle. And then I spot it. Its wings slope in the opposite direction to all the others. Cool or what. 'XF-29 FSW', says the text box. An excellent name. As I click on 'accept', I realise that FSW must mean Forward Swept Wings. Of course! So simple! So perfect! Oh no, now I'm on the ordnance screen, and there are far too many weapons on display. There's like 50 of them. And I don't even particularly want to shoot anything down yet. Hmm. I'll take what I've been given. (Click.)

Quick, quick, quick (2)...

At last. Take-off time! Uhh? Oh, this mission obviously starts in the air. No matter, I understand most of the HUD immediately. How high am I? 10,000 feet, eh? Let's get below cloudbase, quick-smart: I've got an appointment with 20 feet above the ground, flying upside-down... and hopefully between



(Right) The ground detail isn't anything to get excited about, but look at the detail on those planes! The cockpit is pretty detailed too, with lots of handy PIPs to gawp at.

skyscrapers. I flip to inverted and pull back on the stick. Suddenly there's a sound sample from the Rio bloke in the back seat – a gasp, a groan, some heavy breathing. I initially suspect that he's spanking his donkey, but then I cotton on. Brilliant! If that's his reaction to a mere plus five gravities, let's hear what he's got to say about minus three.

Hang on, though, what's that beeping noise? Oh! The plane's gone all wobbly. Ouch. Oh no, we've been hit by a bloody missile! Where's the eject button? I'd better check the manual. (Sound of many pages being flicked, accompanied by an earth shattering explosion as the XF-29 Forward Swept Wings hits the ground, killing both crew members.)

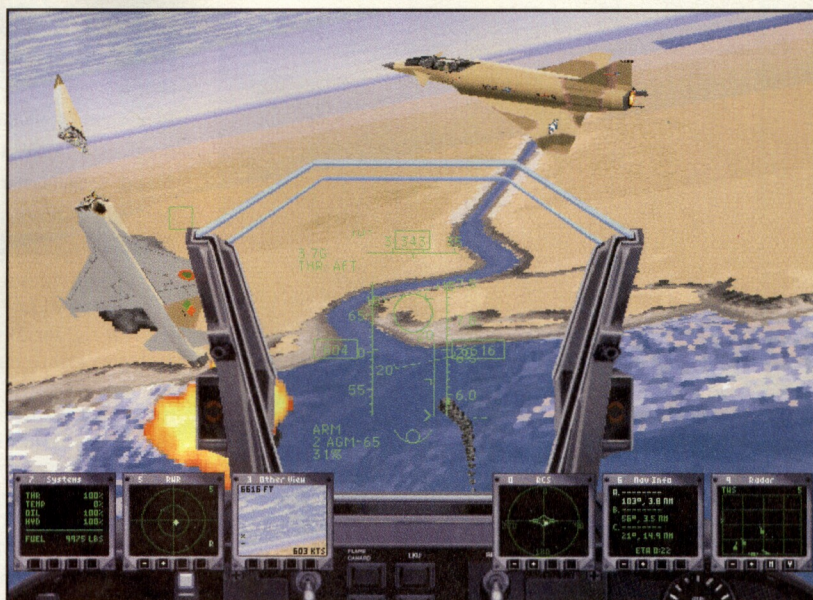
Quick, quick, quick (3)...

(Much time has passed.) I can eject pretty well now that I know the keys I need (<SHIFT>E), but this single mission stuff is simply too hard for someone who just wants to piss about for a while. I mean to say... a flight sim where the only way to get close to the ground is by being strapped to a parachute? Jesus! No doubt some of the other single missions will start on the runway, but I'm beginning to lose all patience. Besides, I've just discovered a much easier way of accessing low-flying shenanigans – I'm going to select the 'aircraft reference' option. There's stats galore in here: loads of photos, movie footage, graphs, charts, diagrams, and everything. But within this option, apart from the comprehensive trainspotty stuff, there's a button labelled 'Free Flight' – or no enemies, in other words. Smart. I select (once again) the Swept Forward Wings XF-29, and... uuugh. Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear.

It may be smoothish svGA down here near ground level, but it looks horrible regardless, and is about as convincing as Michael Jackson's nose. The texture-mapped 'floor' warps pretty nastily at the edges. But that's not all... a quick glance at the HUD reveals that my afterburners are on full and I'm breaking the sound barrier, yet the bitmapped trees are passing by at about 90 mph. Know what I mean? I break to the right and approach a 'city'. According to my HUD I'm now travelling at one trillion squillion zillion miles an hour. As I pass one of the sparse city skyscrapers I look sideways at the thing. Does it flash past like buggery? A vicious blur? No... it simply saunters, like Patrick Moore on lithium. I'm in an airborne Austin Allegro apparently. Boo. I eject.



(Right) Stay up high and it looks just fine; go too low and it sort of loses its sheen. It also tends to chug just a bit if there's a lot going on at once.



Part Two: Excitement lost

Entirely disheartened I slump in front of the monitor, staring at the options screen. Several people pass behind me and say, "Hey, that's just like *US Navy Fighters!*". Three of them inform me that it's been done by the same team. I suddenly recall watching Tim (Ponting, publisher) going completely gaga over *US Navy Fighters*. I also recall Simon (Bradley, reviewer) doing the same over the sequel, *Marine Fighters*. Either I'm right and they're wrong, or it's the other way around. So it's time for an entirely new approach. I select

the option 'create pro mission', and you know what?

After an hour, I realise that I've been a bit shit... ATF is starting to seem very good indeed.

Part Three: Excitement regained

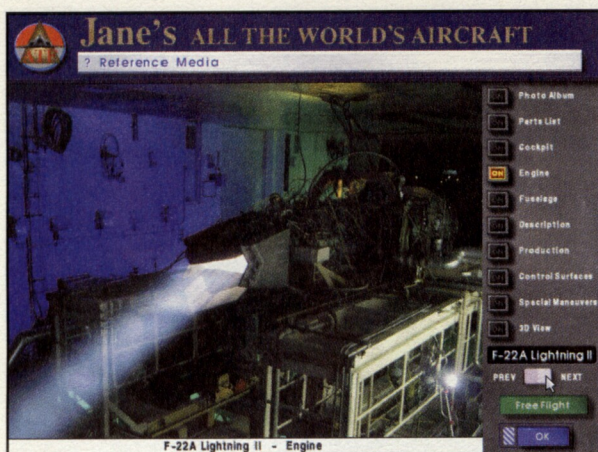
Putting together your own mission is completely fab – and it's dead easy, too. There are three scenarios

to choose from: Egypt, France and Vladivostok, and once you've decided on your location, you can start to populate the map. In the objects menu there are over 250 fully texture-mapped 'things' ranging from the ridiculous (a moose) right through to the sublime (the much aforementioned XF-29).

Between these extremes there are tents, people, buildings, cranes, trucks, tanks, boats, and so on: name an object and it'll probably be there. Once you've placed an object, you can then give it your instructions and waypoints (unless it's a building, of course), and toggle its importance regarding the final outcome of the mission you've selected.

If you're familiar with *US Navy Fighters* you'll know how the system works, but if you aren't I'll just say that there are a few lines of text about the state of the object in question, and that some of the words are 'hotspots' – click on one and you'll be given a list of alternatives which, when one is selected, will alter the slant of things quite drastically. You





can, in this highly user-friendly way, tell one aircraft to fly a holding pattern above a tank, and that it should see off any aircraft that strays within five miles.

The tank itself, if you've given it waypoints, could be moving all over the shop. You might tell another plane to fly a holding position around the plane that's guarding the tank... and that this second plane should see off any enemy plane that strays within 50 miles. You could tell the tank that if it's destroyed, the game is over. Then you could plonk down a zillion enemy planes, of all different varieties and pilot skills, and tell them to kill the tank. Then you can plonk down the plane that you'll be flying yourself, and start the mission, seeing how long you can hold out for before the tank gets zapped.

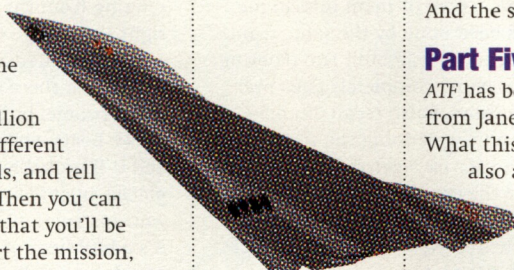
And that's just a crappy little mission. You can go bonkers if you like. And you can be silly too. Ships moving along the land. A trio of planes flying in a circle, each instructed to shoot down the one in front but evade the one behind. Tell them to ignore your plane if and when it appears, and you'll have a right old laugh. Bring some biased SAM launchers into the equation and it's even better. How about making a moose a target of opportunity, earning you a medal if you manage to bag it? Or set the friendly and enemy sides so that your mission scenario is America, Britain, China, Germany, France, Jordan, Israel, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Russia, Syria, Arab Egypt and Islamic Egypt all versus Belgium. Ho ho. And on, and on, and on.

By this time I'd started to forgive the iffy sense of low level speed and bendy texture-maps. And seeing as how the 'play single mission' missions were obviously put together using the very same mission creator, I decided to have another bash. Yes, it was time to venture into the highly taxing but supremely playable 'campaign'.

Part Four: Deep joy

Strange how one can change one's mind so profoundly in such a short space of time. The fact that scenery-inspired, low

(Above) Of course, one of the best things about ATF is that it's packed full of info 'borrowed' from Jane's on all the hardware in the game. Not entirely necessary, but a nice thing to have all the same. Educational even.



(Right) The lads head for home after a thoroughly top night out in Romford. "Cheerio Nigel, and thanks for the lift to the airport - you're a real brick!"



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb RAM (16Mb recommended)

Processor: 486DX/66

Graphics: VGA, SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

altitude joyrides were a bit of a no-no, now mattered not a jot. The advanced tactical fighter AI routines are brilliant, and the closure rates of the aircraft when dogfighting bear no relation to the dodgy slo-mo stuff on the ground. Quite why, I can't imagine.

But anyway, the action in ATF is pretty much second to none, and the planes fly brilliantly (all noticeably different, some massively so). Furthermore, let off a big weapon like an excocet, and you lurch up as your plane's overall weight suddenly decreases: all that sort of stuff is programmed in. And the visuals? The explosions? Smoke? Bits of debris pouring off the plane in front as you splatter it with cannon shells? All superb, I'm happy to say; it's a pyromaniac's delight. And the sound's pretty smart too.

Part Five: Trainspotters

ATF has been put together with help from Jane's (the aeroplane book people). What this means is that the ATF CD is also an interactive reference jobbie.

I briefly mentioned the 'player reference' section earlier (which contains more in-depth information about the planes available to the player than could be considered healthy). Then there's 'other vehicle info', a section dealing with the computer controlled aircraft, with photos of all 30, plus about 150 pages of text to boot.

I may as well end on a really train-spotty note, with a list of the aircraft you'll be killing things in: the XF-29 FSW (hooray); the XF-32 ASTVOL (once

shown on *Tomorrow's World*, it's the one that can vector its jets and do cartwheels and stuff); the AC-130U Spectre (I still reckon it's a Hercules); the B2 Spirit (a giant flying wing); the Yak 141; the XF-31 EFM; the F/A-18D Hornet; the Rafale C; the AV8B and FRS2 Harriers (ie the Yank one and the Brit one); the F-117A; the F-14B Tomcat; the SU-33 Flanker; and finally, the F-22 Rapier.

Oh, and don't worry about the mention of the P133 earlier... I also played ATF on a P75, and it was fine (after a modicum of toggling). If you're on a lowish 486, however, you may be forced to play in 'giant pixel' mode. **Z**

Score

92

Bloody good fun, basically. And it's an anoraky reference work too!

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Tel: 01753 549442

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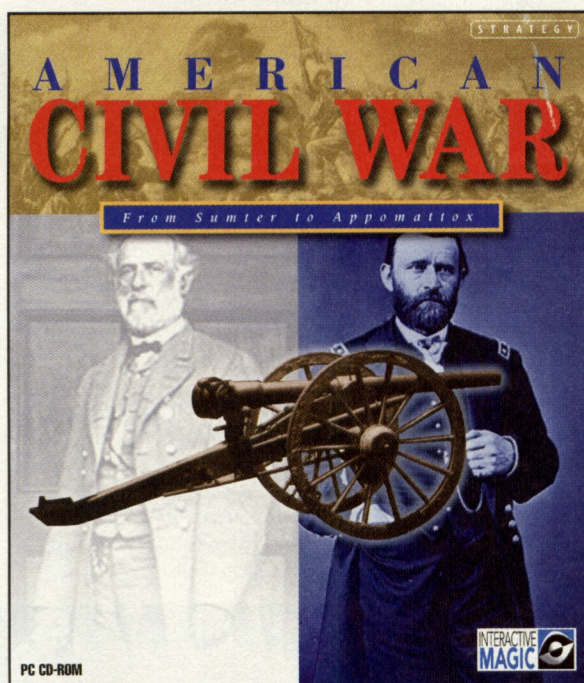
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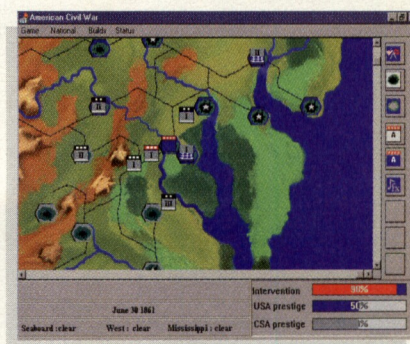
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On tonight's menu... **S.T.O.R.M.** It's an undersea shoot 'em up that's slightly reminiscent of that old-school classic, 'Scramble'. Wearing the plastic bib with a teddy bear printed on it: **Charlie Brooker.**

S.T.O.R.M.

IBET YOU DIDN'T KNOW THAT COMPUTER games and restaurants have something in common with each other, did you? Well, here's a scenario that proves my point and tells you about **S.T.O.R.M.** at the same time...

"Did Sir enjoy his shoot 'em up?"

"Well... I didn't enjoy it all that much, if you want me to be totally honest."

"Sir! I really must apologise! Were the graphics not to your liking?"

"On the contrary, garçon, the graphics were absolutely delicious. Satisfyingly rich, with a crisp, well-defined flavour. Maybe a little dark at times, but they slipped down very smoothly indeed. I cannot fault them in any way."

"Oh. Then perhaps the animation left a little to be desired?"

"Wrong again. The animation was fine. I especially enjoyed the shoals of fish and the photo-realistic shark movements. I'd even go as far as saying it's some of the best seafood I've ever tasted."

"Did Sir not favour the controls?"

"Nope. They were fine (*belch*). Just how I like them, in fact: simple and easy to digest. You can't beat a bit of tradition. Some of these fancy modern games have far too many different buttons in them. It clutters up the plate and leaves you unsure of where to start. You know

where you are with only a couple of movement keys and a mere smattering of fire buttons.

Quite a refreshing change, I can tell you."

"And the sonic effects?"

"Well, nothing remarkable, but certainly nothing to complain about either."

"Well Sir, that only leaves the gameplay."

"Hmm... yes, I was hoping you would get to that."

The gameplay

"So what did Sir dislike about the gameplay? It contains EEC-approved shoot 'em up ingredients. Perhaps Sir suffers from some kind of allergy?"

"Far from it. I appreciate all kinds of shoot 'em ups. I have nothing at all against ingesting



(Above) Hmm... I'm not sure I'd call this appetising...

(Below, left) ...Now that's more like it!

endless helpings of steaming cathartic violence. Admittedly, I'm not a huge fan of the 'Scramble' school of cookery: the constant presence of the perilous landscape irritates my palate somewhat, but I don't always dismiss them outright."

"Maybe Sir found it... a little tough?"

"That's it. Yes. It was tough. Far too tough. It made me want to stop chewing after my first couple of mouthfuls. Look! I broke three teeth on level one alone!"

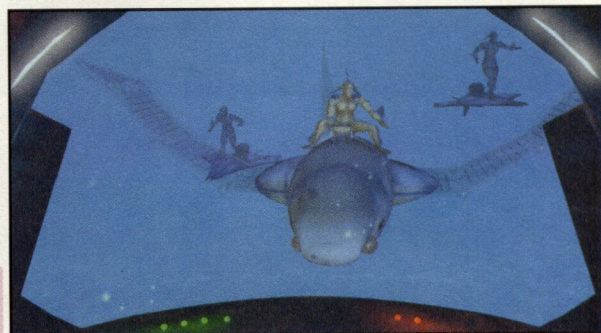
"Ah. So now we finally arrive at the truth, Sir. The problem is not with the gameplay, the problem is with Sir. May I be so bold as to suggest that Sir is a girly puss who cannot stomach a bit of gristle with his shoot 'em up, and as a result is merely sulking."

"Watch your lip, slave boy. I may have the world's strongest teeth, but I think even Jaws himself would have difficulty crunching his way through this. It's rock hard, for heaven's sake. I wouldn't mind if it started out a bit soft and then gradually set until it resembled concrete, but this is like tungsten steel from the very beginning. And you have to go back

Names for shoot 'em ups that don't exist yet

Seeing as how **S.T.O.R.M.** is a bit of a dull title for a game, here's a list of top-notch names just waiting to be snapped up and used for any aspiring shoot 'em up. (Software houses – slip me a tenner per name and they're all yours.)

Omniphobe
Run For Your Goddamn Lives! (Commando-style game)
U.S.S. AK-47
Gungasm
Testosterzone IV
Angry Penis Wars



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX/33

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, joystick

Score

70

The prettiest, Scrambliest, impossibliest shoot 'em up I've seen in ages.

Price: £TBC Release Date: April

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Tel: 01753 549442

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

and do the same bit again and again until you get past it. It's so difficult to progress further than five pixels down the screen at a time that you lose faith before you've even started to play it properly! I hate games that become long, tedious trials. And another thing..."

"Excuse me Sir, but we seem to be discussing the game as if we're talking about a meal you've just eaten. I'm playing the waiter. Remember?"

"Oh. And it looks like we've just run out of space. Oh well." **Z**



PC Home 91%

"The graphics are great and the animation is top quality"

Cyber Soft 8/10

"The radical sense of humour is simply ace"

PC GAMEPRO 89%

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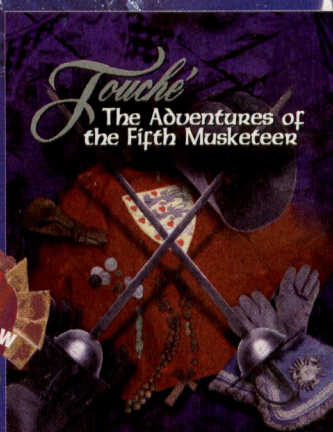


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8/10
PC Review

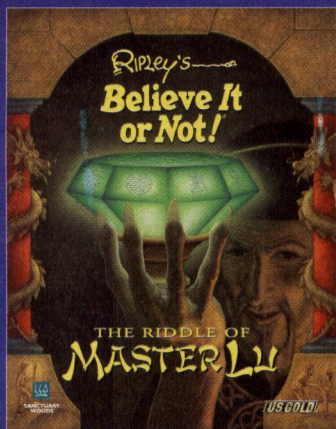
5/5
Computer Life

THE RIDDLE OF MASTER LU™ >

"It looks simply gorgeous, and puts LucasArts games to shame."

PC Gamer

"...a genuinely classic adventure game."
"Computer Life says buy it!"
"...this is a fine adventure which is as hard on the brain as it is easy on the eye."



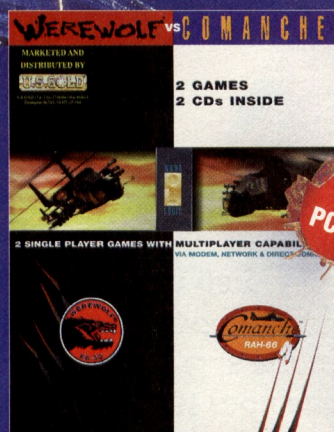
8/10
PC Review

THUNDERHAWK® 2 >

"Enough flying lead, whirring blades and impressive explosions to satisfy just about anyone's appetite for war and destruction. Lap it up gamers, this one kicks ass!"



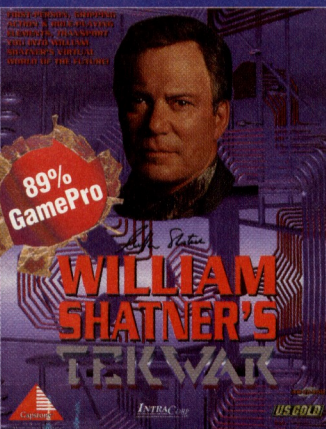
91%
GamePro



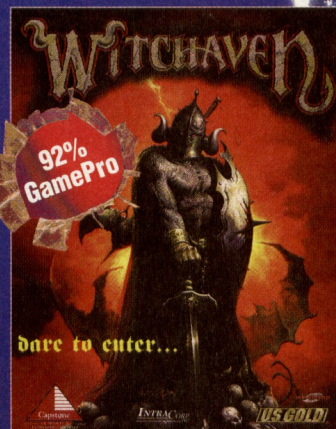
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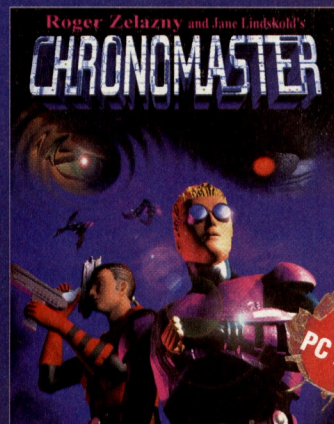
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< WITCHAVEN™

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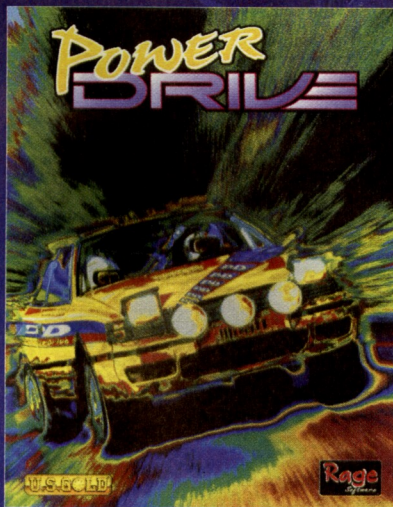
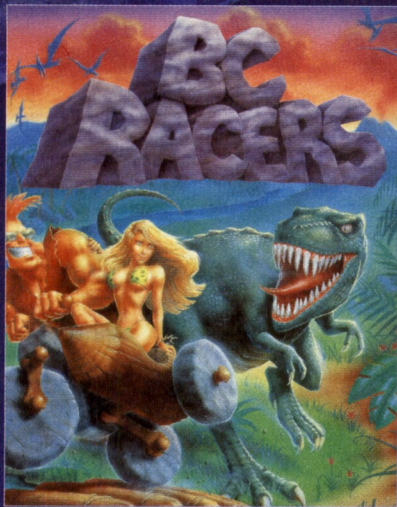
"Slick, smooth and engrossing. Adventure with attitude... how refreshing."
"...richly detailed graphics and superb rendered cut scenes, all of which combine together with an excellent plot to make Chronomaster one of the best adventure games of the year."

9/10
PC Review

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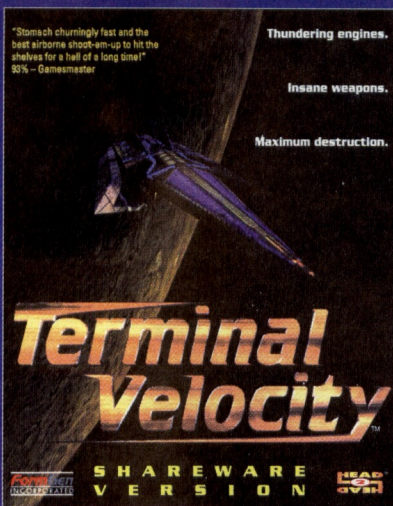


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SMASH & GRAB



PERSONALLY SPEAKING, I RECKON IT would be a pain in the arse being a spy. Every morning you'd have to get up and plough your way through a fresh 'web of intrigue'. You'd be filing reports in secret code. Meeting fidgety, chain-smoking informants down back alleys. Skulking about in subways. Being chased by accomplished hitmen. Seven days a week, with no lunch breaks.

And answer me this: when have you ever seen a Bond movie in which James Bond wakes up on a Monday morning, decides he just can't be arsed to go in to work, phones up MI5 - putting on a 'croaky' voice and claiming to have 'a dicky tummy' - and then spends the rest of the day lolling about on the sofa watching Richard and Judy? They'd probably come round and blow up his flat if he tried it on. It's a crappy job: a stint in *Burger King* would be preferable.

(Above) A combat segment. Anyone stupid enough to show their face is going to get six rounds emptied into it. Where's Noel Edmonds when you need him?

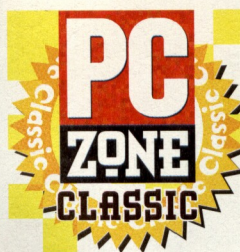
(Below) The Assassination makeover. Before: one crazed, ranting, right-wing Russian politician...

...and after: One crazed, ranting, right-wing Russian politician having a 'bad skull day'.



The trouble with Harry

The first thing I noticed about *Spycraft* wasn't the overall quality of the game, but the appearance of a Mr Charles Napier as a training instructor. So who the hell is he, then? Well, anyone who's ever seen Russ Meyer's masterpiece *Supervixens* will instantly tag him as 'Harry', the psychotic, impotent cop, who manages to completely steal the show from the countless buxotic beauties who fill every other frame. If you haven't seen the film (which Mr Napier also co-produced), then shame on you. It's great. And there's a bit in it where a farmer shags a chicken. And a dynamite-throwing fight. And Charles Napier is quite awesome.



Charlie Brooker is a bit of a veteran spy... or rather a spy in the house of love, as frequenting peepshows in Soho takes up every minute of his free time. He likes his Martinis shaken, not stirred. And usually he ends up paying about 85 quid for 'em.

Spycraft: The Great Game

Super sleuthing rules!

Far better, then, to satiate that desire to get yourself neck-deep in the shadowy world of espionage by having a crack at a game like this. *Spycraft* is an adventure game which enables you to stalk the murky corners of the corridors of power as an undercover CIA 'special operations' agent. Actually, calling it an adventure game isn't strictly accurate - it's much more of a fully-blown 'spy simulator' in which you get to fiddle about with almost every aspect of covert sneakiness you could think of. Satellite photography, image analysers, decoding routines, infra-red goggles - and of course, guns - it's all here. And it's all yours.

Indeed, it's pretty hard to categorise this game as a 'type' in any way, shape or form. When you first start playing, it all looks set to turn into an 'interactive movie', full of (very high quality) video



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX2/66

Graphics: SVGA; VESA local bus or PCI video card

Sound: SoundBlaster 16 or compatibles

Controls: Mouse

Note: Double-speed CD drive, 30Mb Hard disk space, DOS 6.0 or Windows 95 required. 8-bit sound cards (such as the original SoundBlaster) are NOT supported

sequences and the odd mouse click here and there. Then it suddenly throws you a curve ball by chucking in some *Mad Dog McCree*-style combat sequences. Just as you're coming to terms with that, it turns into a point-and-click adventure.

And as if that wasn't disorientating enough, it goes about-face yet again and turns into a kind of 'Microsoft Office for Spies', presenting you with a range of - get this - software applications, such as an identikit builder, or the 'Kennedy Assassination Tools' program, which cleverly works out the position of a sniper from the position of the bullet holes at a crime scene. The overall effect of all this is that you've constantly got



Reality bites

One of *Spycraft*'s most original features is only available to players lucky enough to have Windows 95, a modem, and an Internet account. If your set-up fits that bill, you'll be able to browse through freshly updated information as you play the game... it even manages to incorporate real-life news events into the storyline. Furthermore, you can converse with other players, and even a real life 'character' – an Activision employee who will 'chat' to you via e-mail, offering suitably 'spy-like' responses to any questions you care to ask him. Downright spooky, eh?

(Left) One of your many 'pen pals', who will help you analyse crime scenes. And she makes a killer salmon mousse, too.

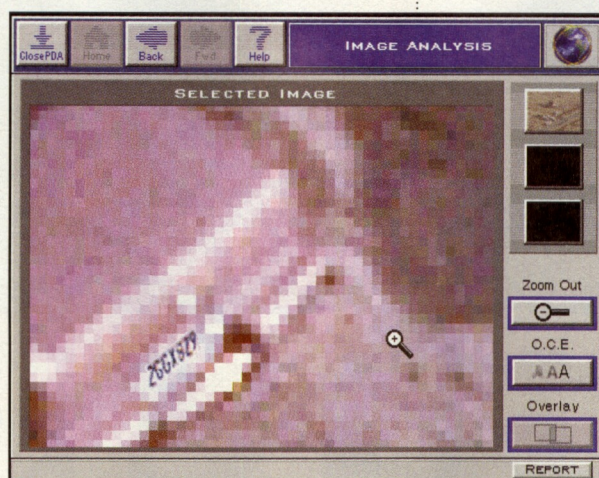
something new to get to grips with. It's not very long before you're totally absorbed. This is a Very Good Thing.

Lots and lots for us to do

It has to be said that it's been a long time since I've seen such an original and varied game design. And as well as that, it's also surprisingly 'authentic' in tone. Activision's publicity has made a big deal over the fact that *Spycraft* has been developed with the estimable help of William E Colby (a former director of the CIA), and Oleg Kalugin (a former KGB Major General) – and for once it seems that the publicists were right, and the association with these high-ranking skulldiggers has obviously paid off. The game actually appears to know what it's talking about.

Ruskies, guns, intrigue!

As for the 'plot' – well, it really would be unfair of me to give too much away, since most of the fun is to be had from trying to work out just what the hell is going on, and why. Suffice to say that the storyline starts with a forthcoming

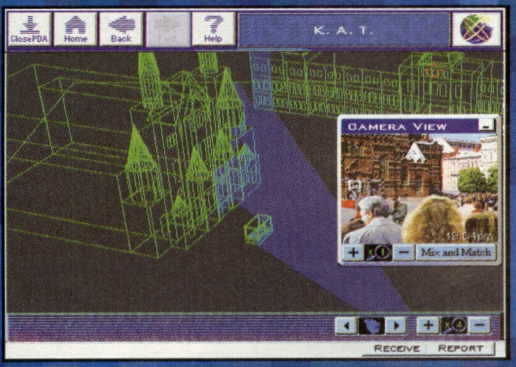


Russian election, a nuclear arms treaty, and a smoking gun. It gets increasingly intriguing from that point on. Aside from all the high-tech gadgetry at your disposal, you've got your very own team of agents working under you, plenty of different locations to snoop around in, loads of suspicious-looking characters to cross-question, and finally, to please

(Above) It's amazing! Here we've zoomed in and enhanced a satellite image, in order to work out the licence plate number of a suspect car. They can run, but they can't hide.

Magic bullets

Here's a glimpse of one of the many 'applications' you get to fiddle about with in the game. Here we see a mock-up of a Russian square following a particularly messy assassination. Your task is to search for bullet holes using the wireframe model and a collection of stills from a camcorder tape recovered from a civilian at the scene. Find the bullet holes, work out the trajectory, and you can isolate the sniper's position. Then you can check the camera stills to see if his or her face has been caught on film. Clever stuff – although you'll still have to work out the identity of the assassin by running a photo-fit on their fizzog once you've found it. Apparently this is based on a real-life application designed by the CIA to prove the 'Magic Bullet' theory (the 'proof' that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone) that the bods of the Warren Commission expected people to give credence to. If you ask me, it was that grassy knoll wot done it. Knolls are notoriously good shots, after all.



(Right) Ooh. That's that bloke, isn't it? He was in that thing, wasn't he? No, don't tell me.. I know it. Umm. Now what was his name again? Ohhh...

Score

91

I spy with my little eye... an undercover classic.

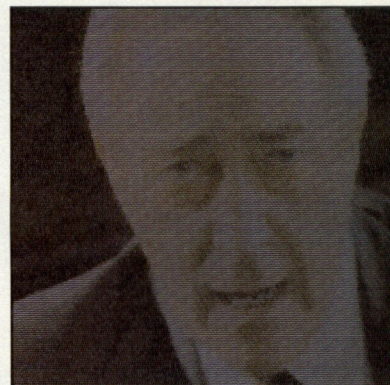
Price: £49.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Activision
Tel: 0181-742 9400

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

the meaner types among you, there's even a bit of torturing that needs doing (although squeamish souls do have the option to bypass the torture bits – the big wusses). Oh, and by the way, it ain't easy. The game assumes that you are an adult with an adult-sized brain, and proceeds to treat you accordingly. It's also very large, so cancel any evenings out you've got planned now.

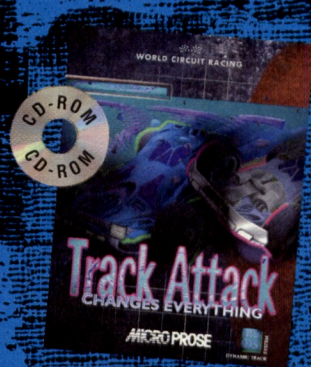
Spy-tastic

The presentation throughout is slick and assured, the video sequences are well-made (and actually feature some credible acting for once), the sound effects and music are superb, and the amount of background information is quite flabbergasting. If this one doesn't suck you in, you're unsuckable. Anyone who's ever been remotely interested in sneaking about should invest in a copy as soon as possible. And that's that. **Z**



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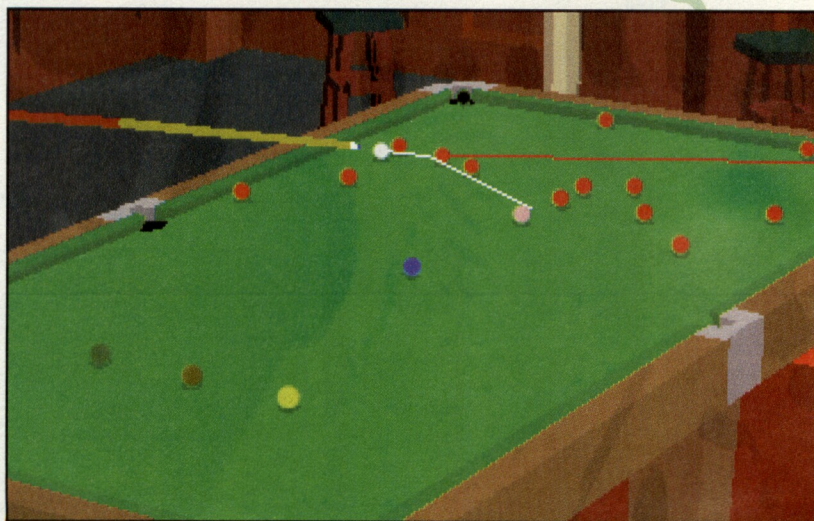
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MICROPROSE

It's from the people who brought you *Virtual Pool*, but it's got snooker in it (and Steve Davis). Can you take the *Zone Challenge* and stay awake through Patrick McCarthy's review?

Virtual Snooker



(Left) "Ooh! It's *Virtual Pool*! No, hang on a mo' it's that new one, what's it called? Erm... is it *Virtual Snorer*?"

THINK OF THE MOST BORING THING in the entire world... but make sure it's something that would guarantee that, as soon as it's shown to you, or played to you, or even simply hovers around the periphery of your consciousness, doesn't just dull your thought processes slightly, but causes your brain to abruptly snap into shut-off mode, resolutely refusing to allow itself to take in any information, and makes you want to start making low moaning noises. You know the sort of thing I mean... an afternoon in *Ikea* with a deaf incontinent aunt; the world indoor bowls championships; a tedious long-haul flight which shows an entire series of *Goodnight Sweetheart* instead of a film; an Arsenal away game (or an Arsenal home game, come to that).

Zzzzzzz... pwueeeeh... zzzzzzz

Whatever it is that affects you in this way, I've just seen something worse. An entire 147 break by Steve Davis. In full, with all the pauses for thought, taut buttock shots (for the girls), searching gazes around the table and scratching of nose, testicles and other body parts.



This feat is made even more exciting (if that's possible) by the fact that everything's in real-time (not speeded up and set to *Keystone Kops* music, or anything like that). And as if watching Steve Davis isn't bad enough, you have to listen to his commentary and 'amusing asides'.

What we have here goes beyond boredom. This is *Überboredom*. This is the sort of thing they should play to people on assertiveness training courses, to get them into the habit of leaving rooms when they want to leave. And I've just seen it on a computer game. Why?

Zzzzz—snawk!... flub-flub-flub...zzzz

"Why?" indeed, seeing as *Virtual Snooker* is essentially the same as *Virtual Pool* (in itself a fine game, by the way). So you get an intro from Mr Davis, and the aforementioned *Überboredom*, but the gameplay doesn't come anywhere near justifying the asking price.

(Below) *PC Zone Health Warning*: Prolonged exposure to this game can lead to a poor appetite and, in some cases, the loss of any will to live.



Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb

Processor: 386DX

Graphics: VGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse

Zzz-skawah—! Wha? Gumbleh?

Ah, the gameplay. Let's see how the top notch pool game has been transformed into the more demanding game of snooker, which as we all know is played on *different* sized tables, with different rules and different coloured balls...

Ah. They've taken the same pool table, complete with plasticky-sounding pockets instead of posh net arrangements, used the same virtual bar as in the first game (but they've done away with the oh-so-atmospheric fan, so you'll think it's Ye Quaynte Englishe Pubbe), and replaced the pool balls with snooker ones.

And that's it. The table doesn't seem any bigger and the graphics are exactly the same (basic, I think is the word). So it has the same intuitive controls as its predecessor, but that's not enough, given that *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker* is available in bargain bins, and there's both a shareware and a cheapo version of their own *Virtual Pool* available. Pick *Virtual Snooker* up on the bargain shelf in about a month's time. **Z**

Score

60

Virtual Pool with different coloured balls.

Price: £34.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Interplay

Tel: 01628 423666



GATEWAY2000

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GENIDER WARS

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- Almost everything can be blown up!



GENIDER WARS

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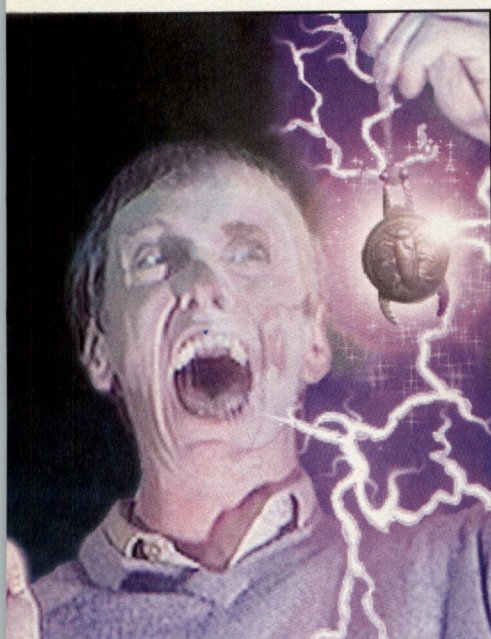
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BAD MOJO

Publisher: Acclaim

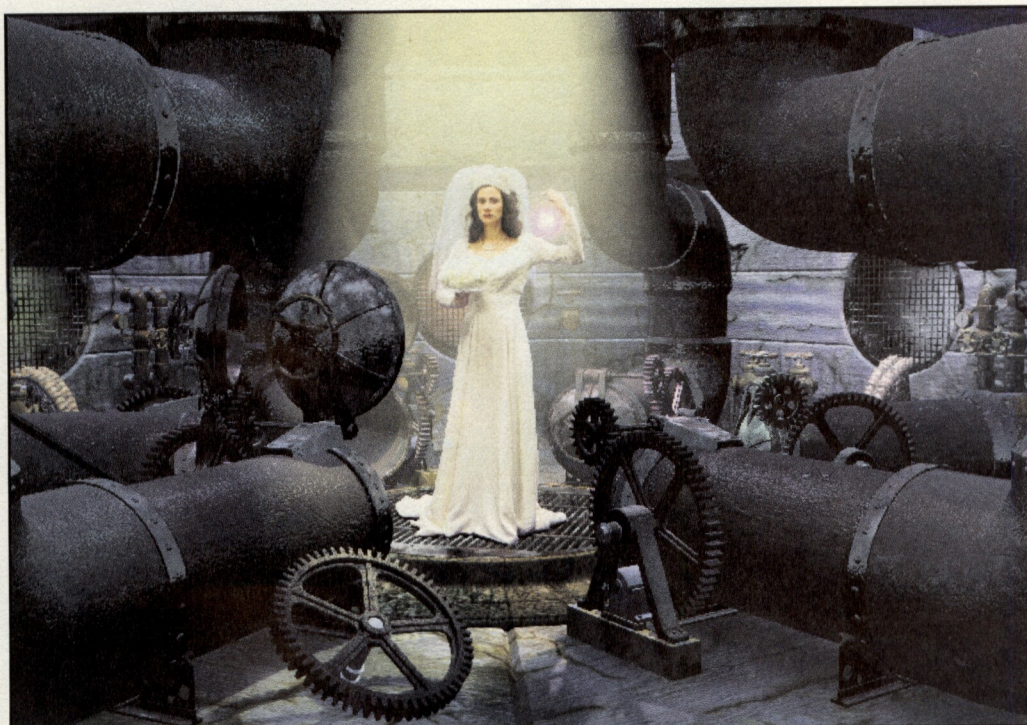
Tel: 0171-344 5000

Price: £TBC

Note: Windows 3.1 or above and double-speed CD drive required

SCORE: 70%

Weird game alert... *Bad Mojo* is an adventure game in which you play the part of a petty criminal who's been turned into a cockroach. No, really. However, since cockroaches aren't particularly adept at tying ropes to trees and recovering mystic swords, there isn't any handy point-and-click interface. Instead you have to *scuttle* everywhere using the cursor keys – not as crap as it sounds since your 'roach moves in an unsettlingly realistic manner. Lovely graphics, lovely sound, and plenty of oblique puzzles which you have to work out for yourself. All in all, it's a cross between *Myst* and *Ecco The Dolphin*, covered in insects. Absorbing stuff once you get to grips with it, but you'll want to wash your hands afterwards.



(Above and above left) *Bad Mojo*: Sick of your friends calling you a low-life? Sorry, but you won't do much to prove them wrong in this game playing a cockroach, will you?

CHRONOMASTER

Publisher: US Gold

Tel: 0121-625 3366

Price: £39.99

Note: Double-speed CD drive required

SCORE: 68%

Weird game alert, take two... Submitted for your approval: *Chronomaster*, in which you play the part of an immortal intergalactic troubleshooter, called in to investigate, and hopefully reverse, the enforced stasis of two pocket universes. Buh? Anyway, it's an old-school point-and-click adventure, replete with old-school puzzles, and a lengthy opening gambit which foolishly forces the player to sit through a series of dull conversations before getting on with the action. Slow-paced, a little uneasy on the eye, and a bit too 1993 for my liking. Sci-fi nutrags and point-and-click completists may take a shine to it, but the rest of us can find satisfaction elsewhere.

THE DARK EYE

Publisher: INSCAPE/Time Warner

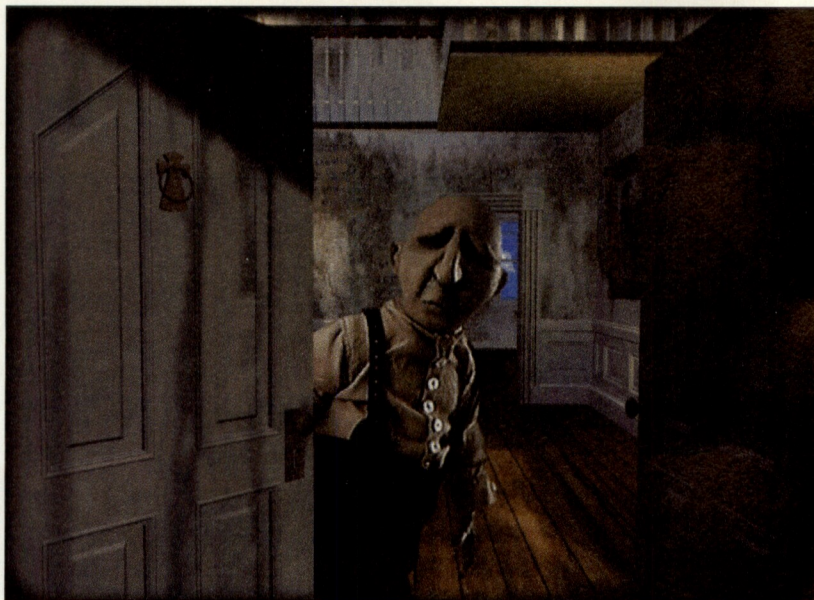
Tel: 0171-391 4300

Price: £TBC

Note: Windows 3.1 and double-speed CD drive required

SCORE: 42%

High weirdness yet *again*. *The Dark Eye* is further proof – as if any were needed – that *Myst* has a lot to answer for. It's a Windows-based 'adventure' in which you have to navigate a pre-rendered world of oddness, with little or no clue as to what's happening. It all revolves around some spooky paintings, but it's far too poncey to really become enjoyable. The cast is a bunch of eerie-looking marionette types – somehow it reminded me of an Oliver Postgate production gone bad. If you enjoy stroking your chin and pondering the significance of endless amounts of horseshit, snap up a copy today. Otherwise, just say no, kids.



HARDBALL

Publisher: Accolade/Time Warner
Tel: 0171-391 4300
Price: £39.99
Note: Double-speed CD drive required

SCORE: 71%

Another videogame incarnation of 'Rounders for Blokes'. *Hardball 5* is a decent baseball title, with photo-realistic style of graphics, and of course, a towering mountain of statistics (it is American, after all). The action is fairly laid-back, with the emphasis on choosing your own particular strategy for each swing of the bat. As is the case with every other sports simulation under the sun, it only really comes into its own when you're playing against a human opponent - the modem link-up option included here should actually be rather good fun. For my money though, the best baseball game ever is still *Baseball Stars 2* on the SNK Neo Geo system. Once prohibitively expensive (individual cartridges used to cost anything up to 200 quid) Neo Geos can now be found going (relatively) cheap in the second-hand market - so if you *really* want an action-packed baseball game to play with your mates, I'd look into it if I were you. This isn't bad, though.

THE RESIDENTS: BAD DAY ON THE MIDWAY

Publisher: iNSCAPE/Time Warner
Tel: 0171-391 4300
Price: £39.99

Note: Windows 3.1 and double-speed CD drive required

SCORE: 30%

Another bloody WEIRD one. Not so much a game, more a piece of 'interactive art', if you can call it that. The Residents used to be famous for wearing giant eyeballs on their heads and making weird, innovative albums. Now they're getting stuck into multimedia. *Bad Day On The Midway* is a stifflingly pretentious 'journey' through a surreal funfair, utterly chock-a-block with risible, chin-stroking tosh which is presumably supposed to signify something or other. Self-important, pseudo-intellectual masturbation, in other words - and *American* masturbation at that. These people will be first up against the wall when the revolution comes, brothers and sisters. Avoid like billy-o, unless of course you're ripped to the tits on mind-mangling drugs, or you're a pony-tailed, Powerbook-hugging prick in a poloneck. Named Nigel.



(Left) *The Dark Eye*: Here's one of the creepy puppetmen. I wouldn't let him do my babysitting.

(Above) *Zone Raiders*: Like Wayne Sleep, it moves well but fails to do anything really interesting.

WAYNE GRETZKY AND THE NHLPA ALLSTARS

Publisher: Time Warner Interactive
Tel: 0171-391 4300
Price: £TBC
Note: Double-speed CD drive required

SCORE: 74%

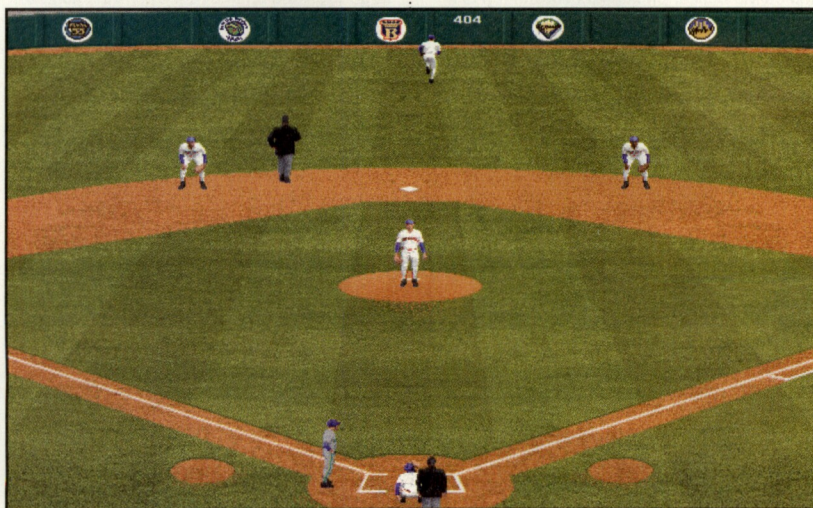
What a great name for a male striptease troupe. They could do a nice little 'loincloth' routine, and call the show *Wayne Gretzky and the NHLPA Allstars in 'Jungle Trouble'*. This is a fairly robust ice hockey sim in which the on-rink fisticuffs play almost as important a role as the tactics of the game itself. In fact, it's rather like a 'Holiday on Ice' production of *StreetFighter 2*. Unlike EA's *NHL 96*, the action is viewed side-on, although there is an option to let the camera zoom in and out if you so choose (and I would suggest that you do *not* so choose, unless you're a big fan of that incessant 'in and out' zoomy camerawork that plagues just about any film made during the late '60s). All in all, it's not too bad really - but not a patch on EA's counterpart. So you'll probably want to buy that instead. Sorry Wayne, but that's life.

ZONE RAIDERS

Publisher: Virgin Interactive
Tel: 0171-368 2255
Price: £29.99
Note: Double-speed CD drive required

SCORE: 65%

Zone Raiders is something of a cross between *WipeOut* and *Quarantine*, in which you are a 'Raider' piloting your very own customisable hovercar through various futuristic locations, scavenging for useful gizmos and bits of code. Ho-hum. With a beefy machine it runs better than Sony's lamentable PC conversion of *WipeOut* (in VGA mode, at any rate), but the gameplay is decidedly weak. But worst of all, although the 3D engine is impressively smooth, the graphics themselves are garish and messy to look at, and the enemy craft designs are remarkably uninspiring. It does have a network option, but I can't see anybody really bothering. Yet another CD to chuck on the hearth when the firewood runs out and you're too cold to care about poisonous fumes. »



(Left) *Hardball 5*: Go on, give it some stick.

Budget Games

(cut here for free badge!)

Barg-o-rama

Bargain-priced treats that can't be beat! Top quality gaming at a top quality price! Nothing but essential buys are contained within this narrow column! (Alright, alright, we get the idea – Ed.)

Alone In The Dark Collection £34.99

Eccellente, ambassadeur. All three games for less than the price of the new release, which is virtually the same apart from the graphics. Bloody hard, though.

Essential Collections: Business £34.99

Transport Tycoon is *Sim City 2000* for the transport industry, and *Theme Park* lets you make children sick. Excellent!

Essential Collections: Flight £34.99

192 Pacific Air War, *Fleet Defender F14* and *Wings of Glory* – three decent flight sims for the price of a pint. (If you apply the same pricing formula the police use when they recover drugs, that is.)

Essential Collections: Sport £34.99

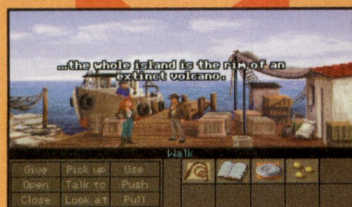
PGA Tour 486 is a superb golf game. *F1 Grand Prix* is the original version of the outstanding racing game. And *FIFA Soccer* is pretty okay, too.

Formula 1 Grand Prix £14.99

If you want the classic F1 racing game, but don't want the other stuff in the Sport Collection edition, get it this way. You know it makes sense.

Indiana Jones And The Fate of Atlantis £12.99

The talkie version of the thoroughbred point-and-click Indy adventure, with three ways to play. VFM, bargain hunters.



IndyCar Racing £9.99

Definitive, great-looking oval-track racing sim, with almost everything the follow-up has – only it's under a tenner.

Power, Corruption and Lies £34.99

A good compilation. Worth buying for *UFO* and *Dune 2* alone, it also includes *Fleet Defender F14* and *Beneath A Steel Sky*.

There have been complaints that the use of the term 'Squeak' to describe those whose only crime is to have an eye for a good deal is less than complimentary. This isn't so: we all have a little of the squeak in us. Now rejoice, penny-pinchers, here's **Patrick McCarthy** with bargains galore...



(Above) *Terminal Velocity*: Okay, so it's not a 'must have at all costs' type of game, but at this price it's more than good value for money.

TERMINAL VELOCITY

Publisher: Kixx XL

Tel: 0121-625 3388

Price: £12.99

SCORE: 80%

Terminal Velocity was the first game to be developed using Apogee's 3D Realms system, it was awaited with the kind of expectancy normally reserved for when Michael 'Jesus H.' Jackson gets on stage with a bunch of kids and Jarvis Cocker on backing vocals. It has a good 3D engine, but the shoot 'em up style is hardly innovative and palls after a while. It's good while your enthusiasm lasts, though, and at this price it's well worth buying.

(Below) *Rise Of The Triads*: A highly enjoyable blast-fest – if it doesn't get your adrenaline pumping, perhaps it's time for that medical check-up you keep putting off.



STAR TREK: JUDGEMENT RITES

Publisher: White Label

Tel: 0171-368 2255

Price: £12.99

SCORE: 70%

Point-and-click adventure with a bit of flight sim-cum-space combat thrown in; based around the Kirk Treks, so there's more chance of having to "teach the meaning of love" to a large-breasted alien bird. Better than its 25th Anniversary predecessor, and the storylines are perfectly in tune with the original series, but the graphics are still bitmapped, rather slow and jerky. But Trekkies everywhere will love it nonetheless. Let's face it, they'll buy anything – have you seen those bloody mugs?

RISE OF THE TRIADS

Publisher: Kixx XL

Tel: 0121-625 3388

Price: £12.99

SCORE: 82%

One of the better *Doom*-alikes, you get bouncy platform game style springs all over the place, a gun in each hand and eyeballs popping out of your victims' heads and bouncing around the screen like an alternative Smarties advert.



UNDER A KILLING MOON

Publisher: Kixx XL
Tel: 0121-625 3388
Price: £12.99

SCORE: 70%

Fully-fledged interactive movies were something of a novelty when *Under A Killing Moon* came out, and it was all a bit scary and new. But when you come right down to it, it's not actually too bad, for its ilk. All talkie (and a rather lengthy talkie at that), it comes on four CDs, and features international megastars like Margot Kidder and James Earl Jones.

SHADOW OF THE COMET

Publisher: White Label
Tel: 0171-368 2255
Price: £12.99

SCORE: 80%

Another decent all-talkie adventure game, set in the spooky New England of HP Lovecraft and based on his *Cult Of The Cthulu* books. It's a case of an involving storyline winning out over less than top-notch presentation: characters scale badly as they make their way around the screen, and 'atmospheric'

close-ups look bloody silly because there's no attempt at lip-synching. But anyway, at least the CD version has a (clunky) mouse-driven interface and the speech is clear and well-acted. Despite its minor faults, the plot means that Lovecraft fans will enjoy it. To round it all off, the CD also includes a simulation of the Lovecraft Museum to wander through, which is hardly a multimedia sensation, but it's a nice touch all the same.

ALONE IN THE DARK

Publisher: White Label
Tel: 0171-368 2255
Price: £12.99

SCORE: 80%

A great game, as well as a decently-priced alternative to paying 35 quid for all three in the Collection, especially if you find out you don't like the first one – which, let's face it, would be a squeak's worst nightmare. In addition to all the puzzles, some of which are nightmarishly lateral-thinking-y, you can unleash as much aggression as you like – there's mucho combatto, with loads of fisticuffs and headbutting, and even a fair bit of shooting. (You might like to look on it as a Faustino Asprilla game. Or you might not.) **Z**



(Below) *Rise Of The Triads*: Although the budget release of this could have been timed better, it's certainly one of the finer *Doom*-alikes.

(Left) *Shadow of the Comet*: If you're a HP Lovecraft fan, you'll enjoy this all-talkie adventure game.

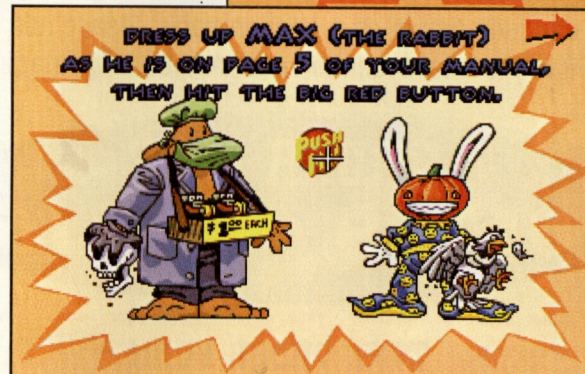
Barg-o-rama

Privateer £11.99

Wing Commander type space-based dogfighting, with *Elite*-style trading sections. Complete with extra bits and speech packs.

Sam and Max Hit The Road £12.99

Full talkie version of the benchmark point-and-click adventure, entertaining and puzzling in equal measures. A must-buy.



Space Hulk £11.99

Gripping strategic gameplay requiring a great tactical mind, a cool head, the reflexes of a humming bird on adrenaline and rubber underwear.

Strike Commander £11.99

Refreshingly straightforward arcade-style flight sim with decent graphics and loads of longevity, thanks to the inclusion of all the extra missions.

Syndicate Plus £11.99

All of the original missions, plus the add-ons, on one CD. This is an extremely addictive strategic shoot 'em up that gets bloody hard later on.

System Shock £11.99

Ultima Underworld in space: big, first-person perspective viewed adventure, with total freedom of movement, loads of weapons and hours of fun/fear.

Wing Commander II £11.99

Not as good as *WCIII* and *WCIV*, but then it runs on normal PCs and doesn't need 5GB RAM. Includes the extra missions and speech packs.

World Of Combat £29.99

Outstanding compilation: top chopper sim *Comanche: Armored Fist*, its tank-game equivalent; and gripping sub sim *Wolfpack*.

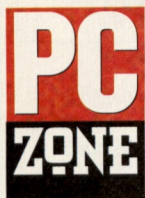
If you're still in need of a few back issues then look no further. Each issue costs £5.95 (£7.95 outside the UK). This covers postage and packing and a small storage charge. Each back issue carries at least one cover disk crammed with games. Most of these will be playable demos or shareware and are listed below. Several back issues have the HD or CD option.

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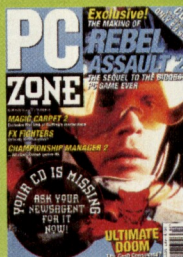
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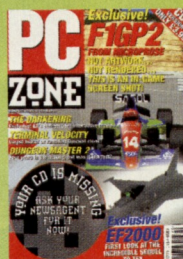
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August 95

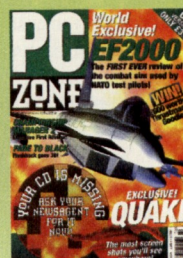
- HD version (AW29A)
Panzer General' The Complete Descent Level Editor
- CD version (AW29A/CD)
Playable demos of Hi-Octane; Micro Machines 2; Dr Drago's Madcap Chase; Darker; Lemmings 3D and more.



September 95

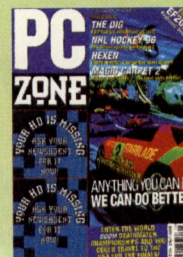
- HD version (AW30A)
Ultimate Doom
- CD version (AW30A/CD)
playable demos of The Duracell £50,000 Challenge; Virtual Golf; FX Fighters, Prisoner of Ice; Buried in Time; Vortex

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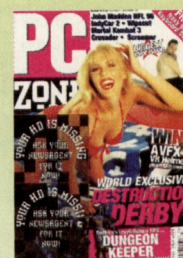
- HD version (AW31A)
Threat; Cathuga
- CD version (AW31A/CD)
Magic Carpet 2; Primal Rage; Prisoner of Ice; Airpower; Need for Speed; Terminal Velocity; Simtower; Picture Perfect Golf; Raven; Druid and more.



November 95

- HD version (AW32A)
Worms; The Machines
- CD version (AW32A/CD)
The Dig; This Means War!; Sim Isle; MechWarrior 2; Action Soccer; Capitalism; The Machines; and the latest Ocean Software demos.

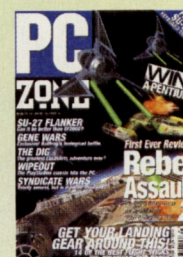
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December 95

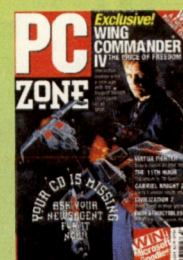
- HD version (AW33A)
Su27 Flanker; Vossnet
- CD version (AW33A/CD)
Hexen; Wing Commander 4; Sensible World of Soccer; Stonekeep; Mortal Kombat 3; Fatal Racing; Witchaven; Alien Odyssey and more.

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January 96

- HD version (AW34A)
Battle Ground Ardennes
- CD version (AW34A/CD)
NHL '96; Destruction Derby; Pro Pinball: The Web; Shell Shock; FIFA '96; IndyCar 2; Terminator: Future Shock; Trivial Pursuit; 3D Ultra Pinball and more.



February 96

- HD version (AW35A)
Screamer; Tempest 2000
- CD version (AW35A/CD)
Beavis and Butt-head; Loogie Game; Voodoo Lounge; The Hive; Radix; Extreme Pinball; Steel Panthers; Silent Hunter; Actua Soccer; Turrican 2 and more.

**CD version only available



March 96

- HD version (AW36A)
Advanced Civilisation; Command & Conquer Editor CD version (AW36A/CD)
Time Gate; Conquest of the New World; Return Fire; Normality Inc; Absolute Zero; Xenophobe; Rayman; Pinball 95; Battle Isle 3; Direct X—Run-time and more

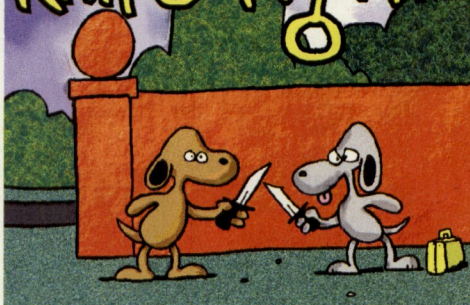
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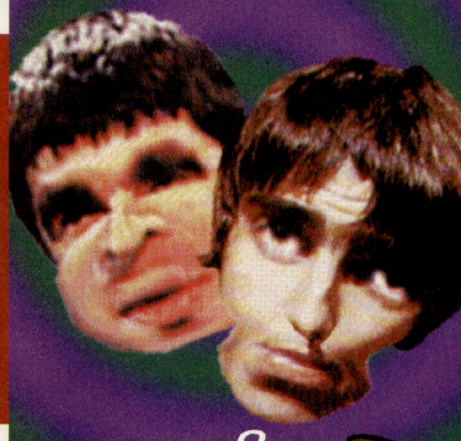
Jarvis Cocker in 'Jungle Trouble'

Courtney Love's 100 Favourite Tantrums

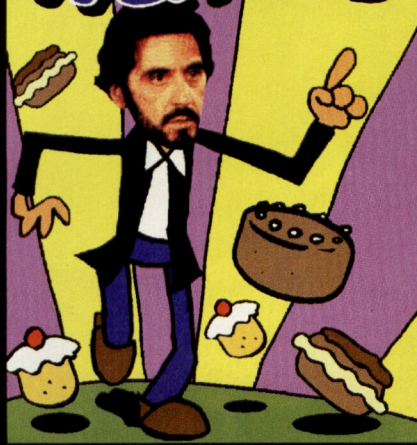


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Al Pacino's
cakey wakey



Al Pacino's
cakey wakey

Join a Hollywood legend as he stars in his very own arcade action spectacular! All hell has broken loose on the set of Al Pacino's new movie- every single cake in the canteen has fallen asleep! The director is furious- and it's down to Al to set things straight! Featuring 47 fun-packed levels of exciting cake-waking action! Thrilling network option allows four players to compete head to head! Whether you wake the cakes, or break the takes, it all adds up to a big HEAP of wakey-cakey takey-breaky hi-jinks!

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CD-ROM

February 1996 Vol 2 No5
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3D Movie Maker
- **THE BAD!**
Mind Of A Killer
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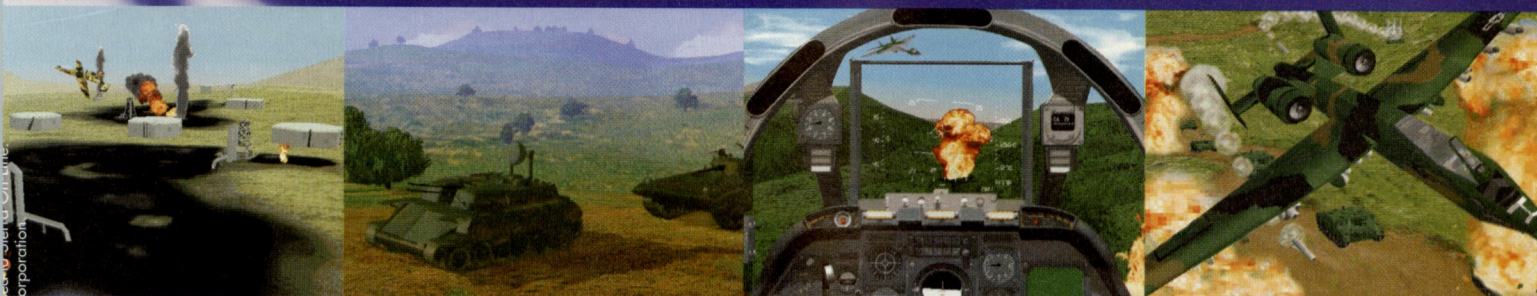
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Strategy Plus Magazine



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0000000 – another on-line service. Just what we need. *PC Zone On-line* sets aside its normal (and not to say, boring) stories of *Doom* daring and long downloads, to bring you the beef – nay the *rind* and the *cartilage* – of fledgling dial-up ‘thingie’ AOL. **David McCandless** investigates...

AOL

in AOL

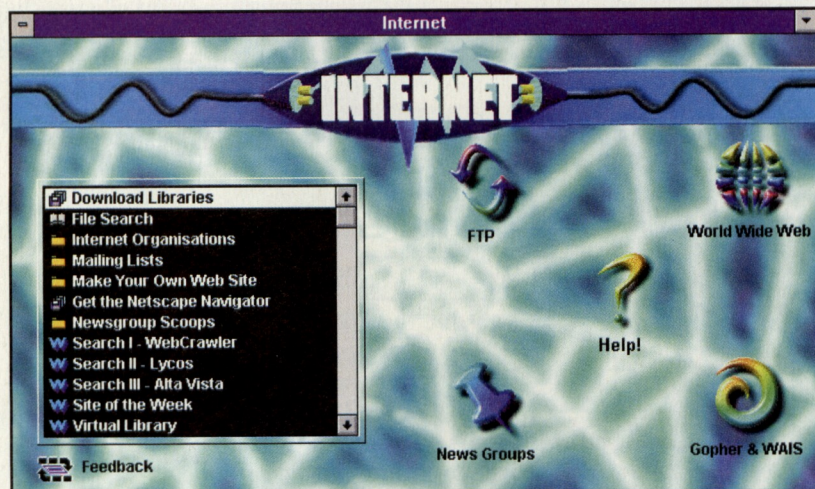
ON-LINE SERVICES EH? WELL, you could count them off your fingers (if you were Ann Boleyn, that is). There's

CompuServe, The Microsoft Network, Wireplay, UK On-line, CIX, er, er, plus a multitude of Internet providers and a trawler net-full of scabby BBSs and home-grown porno dial-ups. Let's face it, what you can't do with your modem and a bundle of cash, isn't really worth doing at all (*Er, what about going out and having a social life?* – Ed).

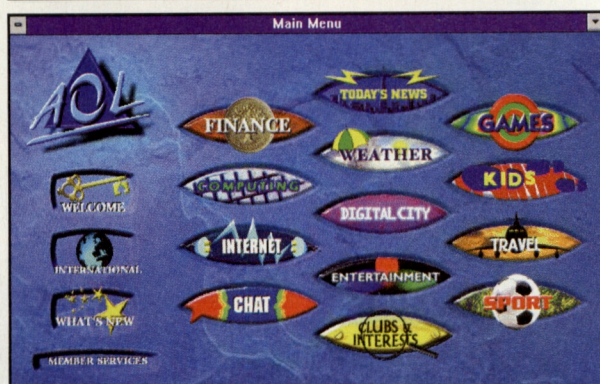
To recap, of course, the term 'on-line service' loosely fits anything you dial into and pay money for the privilege. In exchange for your moolah, custom software allows you to explore the features of a server, normally along the lines of a chat room, forums and file libraries, Internet access, and perhaps multi-player gaming. Some, like CIX, work mainly off-line, which means you dial in, download all the messages and stuff you want, and then log off to process the info. This is cheap. Others, like Demon, combine this approach, while the majority provide front-ends which you use to navigate live and on-line, ie while you're still connected to the service and are paying truck loads of mooch to BT.

Each one has its own advantages, of course. Off-line readers are really the most effective way of tracking message-based conferences and canoeing the perils of Usenet Internet newsgroups. On-line stuff is really the only way to plunder the Net or search umpteen file libraries for the naughty pic of your choice. And live chat – whereby you and a bundle of other strangely socially defunct characters 'talk' in text form in a 'room' – is only really possible on-line (well, it would be a bit silly if you had to log on and off every time you wanted to deliver a meaty quip or put-down).

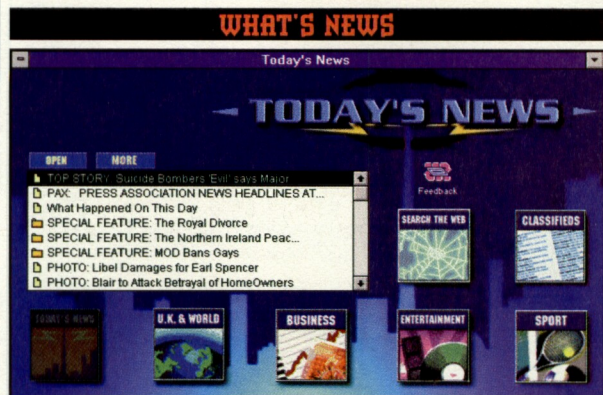
(Below) AOL also has full Internet access, which means full and total entry status to the World Wide Web, FTP sites, Usenet newsgroups, FidoNet, and loads of other stuff you won't understand unless you've used them.



FIRST STOP



After logging on, through a painless but boring-to-relate-here procedure, your first screen will be this: the main menu. It's the kernel of AOL, the hub, if you like, from which radiate many, many arms of interest*: Today's News (self-explanatory and up to the second); Finance (snore); Weather (yes, yes); Games (silly on-line games, mainly for kids); Computing (all things CPU-based including proper games); Kids (pretty boring, unless you like that sort of thing); Internet (superinfobahn-highway nonsense); Digital City (er, dunno, didn't try that); Travel (all the latest hot gossip in the chartered flight world); Entertainment (starlets and stuff); Chat (on-line talking); Clubs & Interests; and, of course, Sport (latest scores, mindless tittle-tattle from bedroom commentators).



A quick click on the 'News' button and we're away. AOL has some nicely categorised current affairs for you to peruse at your leisure. As well as the main headlines (which are, for once, UK-centric), you can dip into subject-led sections (World, Business, Entertainment) or opt to cross-reference stories on the World Wide Web. Us? While the IRA ceasefire cracks and suicidal bombers plague Israel, we're going for the main story of the day – the Royal divorce.



A host of endless headlines chart the history of the royal marriage. Some of them exist solely as text files, while others contain stunning original visual concepts such as the one shown here.

A mouse click later and we're synched into the Web, sweeping around madly for some quality royal gossip. A few sites come up, none particularly interesting (we were more in the market for: 'Diana: GIFS of her soiled knickers').



AOL comes with a free Web browser. Okay, so it's no Netscape but it's good enough for you to lightly skim the interesting bits of the Web (ie about half of it). Here we've found the entire transcript of the famous *Panorama* interview (shown very recently on tv) with a totally unprepared and off-the-cuff Princess of Wales (snore).

Before we leave news, we quickly press an excellent button and are delivered a list of historical events which happened on this date (5 March). To wit:

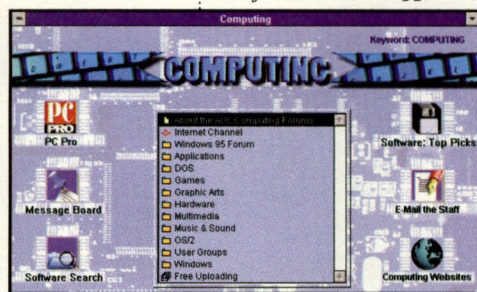
*Incidentally, pictures like this have to be downloaded onto your system before you can look at them. But once they're there, they stay there. With this in mind, be prepared for your first log-on to AOL to be a download-a-thon, with every new page stamped onto your hard disk. All this happens in background, so you can be still be exploring while it's going on.

In 1850, the Menai tubular bridge joining Wales and Anglesey, constructed by Robert Stephenson, was opened. (Wowzers.) In 1918, Moscow was declared the capital of Russia in place of Petrograd. (Fascinating.) In 1933, The Nazi Party won almost half the seats in the German election. (Disturbing.) In 1936, the Spitfire fighter plane made its maiden flight. (Hurrah.) And in 1946, Winston Churchill introduced the phrase 'Iron Curtain'.

Good for you Winston. See? How many other on-line services can drench you in such a welter of emotion and nostalgia with just eight lines of well-chosen text?

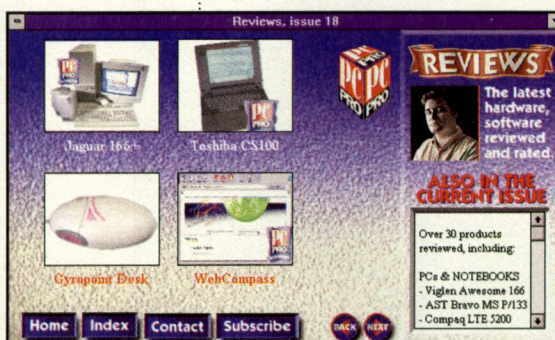
COMPUTING

The next stop on our exciting virgin tour of AOL is of course the Computing section, home of many girlfriend-unfriendly subjects. Windows 95, DOS, Multimedia, os/2, and Games.

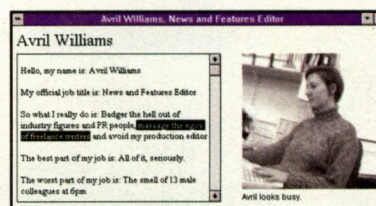


Also, we espy, is a special PC Pro Magazine page. "Lawks," we shout. "If it isn't our sister magazine for more professional PC users." (We say 'sister', but their office is actually on the posh fourth floor and they don't mix with us lowly 'games people' in the basement.) We decide to have a gander at this so-called 'home page'.

Hmmmm, not bad at all. Quite interesting. A complete index of reviews, lab results, columns, and features. How fascinating. What's this? You can meet the staff? Cool.



Gosh, a Gyropoint Desk mouse – how jolly spiffy. Oh, and a Toshiba CS100 Notebook – just in my toffo price range. And who's that sneery sepia bastard, looking at us as if we've just called him a 'girdle'? (Nepotistic note: he's James Tye, Reviews Editor of PC Pro, and he really really reckons himself at Doom).



These magazine homepages are all very well for information and latest reviews, but who really gives a toss who writes for them, what they look

like, and what they like to do in their spare time. I mean – what kind of pervert downloads a bio of a female member of the magazine staff (who, incidentally, is wearing a jumper that should be causing a bumpy rash to appear around her neck) just to read what 'The best part of her job is'?

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GAMING

After that nepotistic diversion, we're off to the rather low-key and somewhat under-designed gaming section, where various specialist areas beckon our interest. The 'Flight Sim Resource Center' seems quite interesting for prop-heads, while the

Game

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- Flight Sim Resource Center
- Game Designer's Area
- SSI's Unlimited Adventures
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- Free Uploading
- Suggestion Box

Weekly Forum News
 Games Channel

Help & Information

Games Forum Leaders:
Debbie Rogers ("PC Sylva")
Roger Frazier ("PC Roger")

 Software Libraries
 Message Board

Keyword: PC Games

Designer's Area looks like a fruitful resource for budding wad designers. 'Meet the Games Staff' eh? Why don't we do that?

Oh dear. The moderators and consultants of the games area seem a little out of touch. They must be at least a thousand years old apiece. Check this out - one of them makes an astute observation: "My love of simulators has grown since using the faster, more powerful machines... It has come a long way since the c64." No way, really? Get this from another one: "I am kind of partial to text adventures. Okay, not partial. More like totally dedicated. I spend most of my waking life looking for them." Hello? HELLO? This is the twentieth century calling AOL consultant - come in please? Text adventures?

There is one saviour though. A consultant cites *Doom* as his most favourite game (nice one), and he "plays it all time" (very good), slipping it in between "watching television" (cool) and playing "pencil-and-paper RPGs" (Doh! He's blown it).

Game servers

Name	Number	Location	Lines	Price	Member	Ladder	Internet	C/C	Comments
The Forest	01425 629629	Hampshire	12	50-90p	1400+	N	Y	N	Friendly, lots of chat
The Forest II	0161-950 9600	Manchester	25	50p	1400	N	N	N	Local to Birmingham
Gamesnet	01222 362361	Cardiff	12	£120-70	600	N	N	Y	Pretty quiet
Gamesnet	0171-400 515	London	20	£120-70	2200	Y	Y	Y	Biggest and busiest
Multiplay	0181-900 1266	London	12	25p		Y	N	N	Very smooth games
The Games BBS	0181-561 3242	London	12	50p		N	Y	Y	Very large file area
Mayhem	01698 888080	Scotland	6	50p	100	N	N	N	Quite new



ON-LINE CHAT

>Instant Message From: OGF Katri

OGF Katri: Welcome to Starfleet Academy (Teen Trek Edition)! This is a simulated role playing game based on Star Trek. The rules are simple. You are assigned a post aboard a starship. You play your position to the best of your ability. If you would like a position, please send me an Instant Message (IM). If you'd rather watch for a while, feel free to do so and IM me when you're ready. You are welcome to watch as long as you like, but please do so quietly. Thank you! :D

Respond Cancel

After a quick spin among the gaming highlights, we duck into the section AOL (in America) is famed for – chat. Yes, many dull American people find it excruciatingly interesting to chat away to complete strangers about a range of subjects (mainly pseudo-sexual it has to be said). Most people are endowed with a spooky 'screen name' (often drawn from some crap sci-fi novel they read when they were 18), and a lot of them are sad, lonely people. Some are interesting. Some are out to be rude to everyone. Some are often a fight. Some don't 'get' sarcasm. Some will even ask you what 'bloke' means. Some are guys masquerading as girls. Some are girls masquerading as guys masquerading as girls (it gets confusing out here in CyberSpace). One common thread unites them all: they're all on AOL, in tens of little chat rooms.

One of the more interesting (or sad, depending on personal taste) applications of live chat is the StarFleet Academy room, where up to 23 'crew members' engage their Star Trek fantasies, acting out an episode of our favourite sci-fi TV series, making up the storyline as they go along. You gotta hand it to them. Z

Starfleet Academy

People in Room: 23

Li Marc O
DPasula
HARLEY7602
Victor V
TUNGOUS
Sideplaner
ARRAK310
WOODE31811
BHartweg
Shaun C007
Skywise 17
Ukprizure

Guide SAK:
Moriarty4:
Tmcdist7:
Li Tu Stix:
Anandamei:
Li Tu Stix:
COMAX2:
IM LOADED:
OGF Wolf:
Li Tu Stix:
TLDACE:
Anandamei:
Cdt Debra:
OGF Wolf:
Gilles Fin:
OGF Katri:
OGF Katri:
COMAX2:
Anandamei:
Li Tu Stix:
OGF Wolf:
COMAX2:
I Victor V:
OGF Wolf:
OGF Wolf:
Moriarty4:

Please keep the chat rated PG Thanks :)
<Eng2> Captain, I believe our first priority should be to get the impulse engines back.
i agree with criely9602
<Ops> Sir????
I am right here!
<Ops>continues to try to find out where we are.....
SCI>I DOES ANYONE NED ME
<Helm>According to star charts, I put us at nearly 15,000 LY from our previous pos.
MR. COMAX2, SEE IF YOU CAN DETERMINE HOW STABLE THE ANOMALY IS.
<Ops> That can't be right!!!
<sc1> Sensor back online!
I have taken over as Chief Medical Officer
<XD> Is there any idea why we can not find out where or when we are?
15,000 LIGHT YEARS?
<TAC> has the rift closed?? can we get back?
Asst Security2 <Sec2> -->BHartweg
Asst Security2 <Sec2> -->BHartweg
The anomaly seems to be somewhat rough
What happened to my Assistant?
<Ops> Sir, that puts up at the edge of the Delta Quadrant!!!!!!
MR. LOADED, LAY A COURSE FOR THE ANOMALY, LET'S TRY TO GET HOME.
Last look it was 20,000 light years away...set a course
I will take over from here, thank you.
<< I Victor V, Please Do Not Disrupt The Game In Progress.
If You Have Questions, Send OGF Katri an Instant Message >>
<Eng2> Not until we make repairs! We won't survive another encounter!

Send

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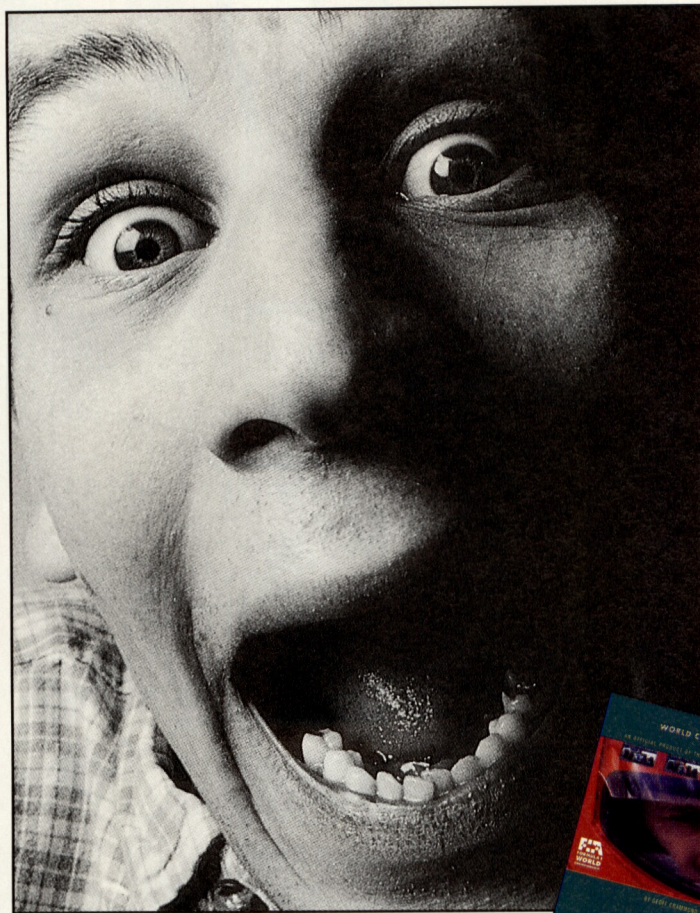
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10 ways to speed up your PC



There are times when you want to sob into your beer or be brutal to whoever's nearest to you, and we don't mean when your favourite footie team loses disgracefully. No, it's when your trusty PC fails to deliver the gameplay goods – but getting better results needn't cost you anything at all... as revealed by PC Zone Agony Uncle **Dave Mathieson**.



IT'S A TALE OF WOE THAT MOST OF US HAVE HEARD ALL TOO MANY TIMES BEFORE... You've just rushed out and bought a top new 3D flight-sim-action-fest, you install it on the PC that you bought six months ago with your life savings, only to have it run like something from the planet Jerky. It's almost as if games developers see PCs as a challenge; take the fastest one available, design a game that will just about run on it, and sod everyone else. As we all know, the truth is that everyone wants the most realistic graphics possible, and this of course takes power. Quite simply, higher frame rates need faster processors. If you then want to add texture-mapping, Gouraud shading and SVGA, you're talking big Pentiums.

While you can't beat a nice hefty CPU for speeding things up, a lot of games are pretty big, which means lots of pauses while loading the next level or attractive animation. This isn't directly affected by the CPU's speed, and if the rest of your system is slow, even the fastest Pentium won't help.

At this point you may be anticipating adopting a life of crime to pay for a new PC, but since the prospect of *Zone* readers doing time just so that they can play *EF2000* is too sad to contemplate, we've rounded up ten cheaper and much easier ways to pep things up. To help you decide how useful they are, we've awarded each one a unique PC *Zone* Jerk Elimination Factor (JEF) rating.



(Left) *EF2000*: While the in-game graphics in *EF2000* may look like stills from earlier games, on anything less than a quick Pentium they might as well be.

(Above) *Magic Carpet 2*: Although SVGA may look lovely, it means loads of extra work for your PC.

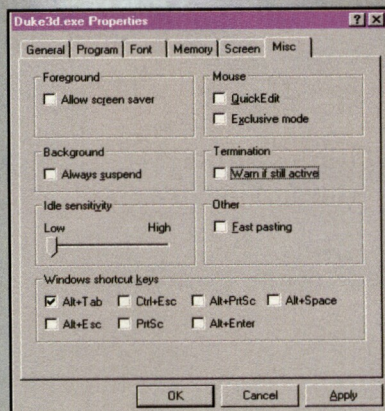
2

Fiddle around with Windows 95 settings

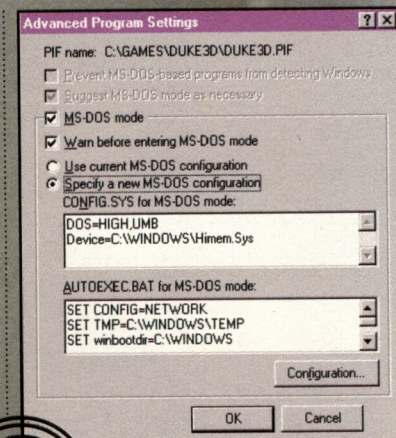
One of the best things about Windows 95 is the fact that you can run games from a DOS session without having to leave Windows at all. Because Windows is still running, however, it uses up a bit of processing power keeping tabs on things. You should always cut this down to a minimum by using the 'Properties' dialog, which is easily accessed by right-clicking on the icon that launches the game.

Under the 'Screen' tab, check the 'Full-screen' and 'Fast ROM emulation' boxes, making sure that the others are blank. Next, go to 'Misc'. Turn all of the check boxes off, and slide the 'Idle sensitivity' all the way over to the left. (You may also want to leave the 'Alt+Tab' box checked so that you can swap back to Windows.)

Cost: £free JEF: 0-5%



(Right) If you really need to you can create custom DOS configuration files in Windows 95.



3

Run programs in MS-DOS mode under Windows 95

Of course, the best way to stop Windows 95 from messing around in the background consuming precious clock cycles is to by-pass it altogether. There are two ways of doing this. Firstly, simply go to the 'Start' menu, and select 'Shut Down'. Select 'Restart the computer in MS-DOS mode', and run your game the good old-fashioned DOS way. The problem with this approach is that, depending on your system files, you may have all the old hassles of making sure that you've got enough conventional memory.

A more effective method is to exploit Windows 95's MS-DOS mode, which enables you to customise Autoexec.bat and Config.sys settings for each program individually. As before, get the 'Properties' dialog up for the program. This time, go to 'Program' and click the 'Advanced...' button. Check the 'MS-DOS mode' box, and select 'Specify a new MS-DOS configuration'. You can now type in your versions of the two files, and have these load each time you start the program.

Cost: £free JEF: Up to 20%

(Left) Windows 95 likes to poke its oar in, so keep this to a minimum by fiddling with these settings...

1

Use SmartDrive

Today's games are big. While the six CDs of *Wing Commander IV* is a mite excessive, most games take up at least 10Mb of hard disk space. This means that your hard disk spends a lot of its time thrashing about looking for data, which translates as big 'go and make a cup of tea' pauses between levels.

SmartDrive is disk cacheing software that comes with DOS and Windows, and it works by using some of your RAM as temporary storage for data from your hard disk. Every time that a record is read from the disk, SmartDrive saves adjacent records in RAM, because the chances are that these will be needed next. Since getting data from RAM is a lot quicker than reading the disk, SmartDrive helps reduce those irritating pauses.

To install SmartDrive, make sure that you have the following line in your Autoexec.bat:

C:\DOS\SMARTDRV 2048 1024

The two numbers are the amount of RAM it uses in DOS and Windows respectively, and these are typical values for an 8Mb machine.

Cost: £free JEF: N/A



(Left) *Wing Commander IV*: No, that's not a pregnant pause – it's an annoying one. Using SmartDrive or getting more RAM can help conversation to flow.

Contacts

Creative Labs 01734 344322

Diamond 01753 501400

Intel 01793 403000

Matrox 01793 614002

Spea 01844 261886

Orchid 01256 479898

4

Get the correct VESA driver for your graphics card

In the days before SVGA, games all used the same standard low-res graphics mode. There's no problem with compatibility as this has been around for years, and all graphics cards support it directly. While most cards support SVGA for Windows, accessing this mode from DOS is a little bit more tricky, since each card implements it differently. The VESA BIOS Extensions standard is designed to get around this by ensuring that each card provides a standard interface for DOS programs. Most modern cards support this in hardware, but there are some which use a software driver instead.

If all this sounds a bit messy, it's because it is. To tidy things up many games come with a universal VESA driver (UNIVBE). While this will work, it can be pretty slow – a better bet is to check among all the disks that came with your PC for the correct one. If you do find it, you'll need to add a line to your Autoexec.bat to load it; if you can't you'll have to contact the card's makers. (You'll find a list of the numbers of some of the major manufacturers in our panel above, right.)

Cost: £free JEF: Up to 30%

5

Turn down detail settings

Okay, this one's a bit of a cheat, but if you've tried all of the above and you still don't want to spend any cash, you're going to have to reduce the workload on your system somehow. Running recent SVGA games on anything less than a P100 will involve making some kind of compromise, and one of the biggest killers of frame rates is texture-mapping. The effort needed to wrap those pretty bitmaps round polygons can cause serious strain to even the fastest CPU, and let's face it, with most flight sims you don't have much time to sit around admiring the scenery anyway.

The likes of *US Navy Fighters* and *Apache Longbow* really benefit from leaving textures out, but if you find that you can't do without them, switching off SVGA should make an appreciable difference. There's a quarter as many pixels on the screen, which means more speed and more horrible blockiness.

Cost: £free JEF: Up to 100%

6

Buy a new graphics card

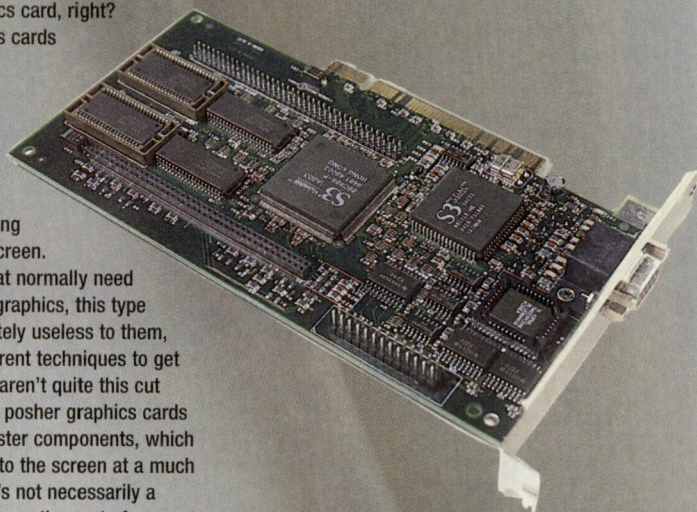
This option might seem obvious at first glance – after all, to speed your graphics up you might as well buy a new graphics card, right?

Wrong – most graphics cards are designed to speed up Windows, which means that they have special hardware designed to help with things like scrolling text and moving windows around the screen.

Since the games that normally need the most help use 3D graphics, this type of operation is completely useless to them, as each one uses different techniques to get things moving. Things aren't quite this cut and dried, however, as posher graphics cards are usually made of faster components, which means that they write to the screen at a much quicker rate. But there's not necessarily a strong correlation between the cost of a new graphics card and game speed; the simplest way to look at it is that a cheap card may be slowing your system down.

There are loads of decent graphics cards available, and two of the most popular are the Matrox Millennium and Diamond Stealth. The Millennium has the added advantage of including 3D acceleration, although this isn't currently supported.

Cost: £100+ JEF: Up to 25%



7

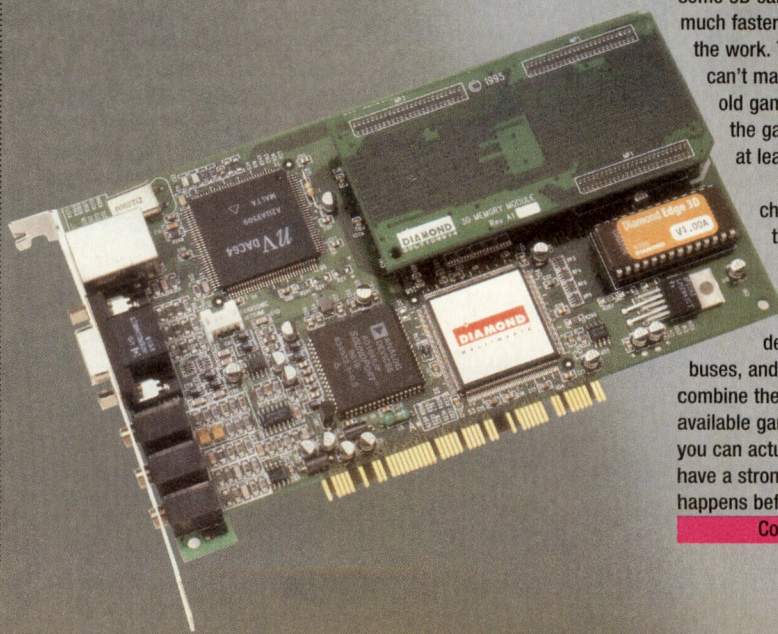
Buy a 3D graphics accelerator

These would appear to be just the ticket, as accelerating 3D graphics is exactly what we're after. But there's a very big catch... 3D accelerator cards contain special chips designed to perform some 3D calculations in hardware, which is much faster than having your PC's CPU do the work. The problem is that the cards can't magically detect which bits of your old games are 3D and speed them up – the game has to be written (or adapted, at least) specifically for that card.

If this still sounds attractive, the choice at the moment is between the Diamond Edge and the 3D Blaster from Creative Labs. Even then, you don't really have a choice anyway, as the Edge is designed for machines with PCI

buses, and the 3D Blaster for VLB PCs. If you combine the fact that there aren't that many available games with the limited effect that you can actually expect from both cards, you have a strong case for waiting to see what happens before parting with your cash.

Cost: £250+ JEF: N/A



9

Upgrade your processor

Of course, the most direct way to speed up your PC is to get a new CPU. This is guaranteed

to make games run faster, and while it's a lot cheaper than buying a new PC, you still get that "Ooh, it's much quicker than my old one!" buzz.

You can't just rip out the CPU from your 386, though, stick a Pentium in its place, and go around boasting to your mates. Your existing set-up limits the options available when upgrading, so pay attention. If you've got a DX/33 (or SX/33), your best bet is to buy a DX2 or DX4. A DX2/66 chip can be simply plugged in as a replacement, costing about £40. Even better, a DX4/100 should also work, although you'll need the OverDrive version of the chip (this is because the DX4 is a 3.3 volt chip, whereas most motherboards are 5 volt), which costs around £120.

The thing is, why bother replacing a 486 with another 486? What you want is Pentium Power, as it says in the telly ads.

Intel have produced two Pentium OverDrives for 486 owners, for 25MHz (SX25s, DX2/50s and SX2/50 CPUs) and 33MHz (DX/33s, DX2/66s and DX4/100 CPUs) motherboards. These cost approximately £130 and £175 respectively.

Although the boxes of the likes of EF2000 and Wing Commander IV claim that the games can be played on a 486, it's not really worth trying these or any other titles that use SVGA (such as *Magic Carpet* and *Hi-Octane*) on anything less than a P90, which was until recently considered pretty zippy.

Luckily Intel seem to be aware of this, having just

brought out yet more OverDrives for such processor hogs. They're designed for owners of P75s and P90s, making them into P125s and P150s respectively – there's also a P100 version on the way that'll give a whopping 166MHz. The cost of these chips is expected to be around £300.

Cost: £50-£300 JEF: Up to 80%



10

Erm...

Blink your eyes slowly while playing all your favourite games until you get used to it, and then stop. Or you could buy a special speedy-up time warp thing. Alternatively, you could drink lots of strong alcohol until your reflexes are so crap that you'll be glad that your PC runs like a slug on Stolichnaya anyway.

On a slightly more positive note, if you're fairly techie a new motherboard with a decent CPU will give you access to things like burst-cache, which is dead quick. We can't entirely recommend this route, though, as it can lead to potential dangers that really need to be covered in more depth.



Conclusion

While making sure that your existing system is set up correctly can make a difference to games, the only way to really do anything about a poor frame rate is to invest in some new hardware. If you've already got a decent PC, you can definitely extend its life without having to do anything too drastic. On the other hand, if your system is on its last legs, buying a new one is probably the only option.

8

Buy more RAM

While PCs seem to drop in price depressingly fast to someone who's just bought one, RAM prices have remained pretty steady for years.

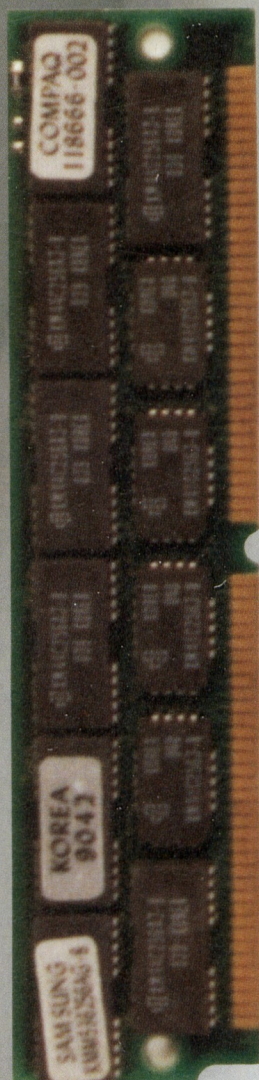
This means that lots of Pentium systems these days are sold with 8Mb of RAM, the same amount fitted to most 486s a couple of years ago.

All more RAM does is give your programs more elbow room. This makes no difference to small ones, but there are more and more games out there that need all the space they can get. On an 8Mb machine these games will have to access the hard disk – or worse, the CD – at vital moments during gameplay, causing mega-jerks. With 16Mb, however, a lot of these extra bits can be kept in RAM, with lovely smooth consequences.

Another advantage of lots of RAM is that Windows 95 runs a lot better. While this has no direct bearing on games, if you really want to show off you can have several running at the same time, swapping between them all at will.

But before you go out and buy more RAM, there are a few things to bear in mind. Firstly, Pentiums have to be upgraded from 8 direct to 16Mb of RAM – an extra 4Mb on its own will simply not be recognised. Secondly, make sure that you have spare slots, and check which type they are. Most newer slots are designed to take 72-pin SIMMs, but many older PCs have 30-pin slots, or a mixture of both. Thirdly, bear in mind that pairs of adjacent slots have to contain SIMMs of the same size. This means that if you've got 8Mb in 1Mb SIMMs, it's not simply a matter of replacing one with a 4Mb SIMM, to end up with 11Mb in total. Finally, while EDO RAM is faster, you need a compatible motherboard for it to make any difference, so check with your PC's manufacturer.

Cost: £200 for 8Mb JEF: N/A



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and your need for domination is
extreme.

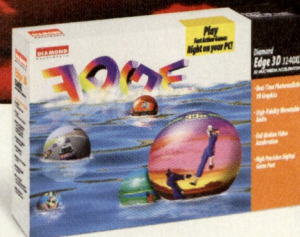


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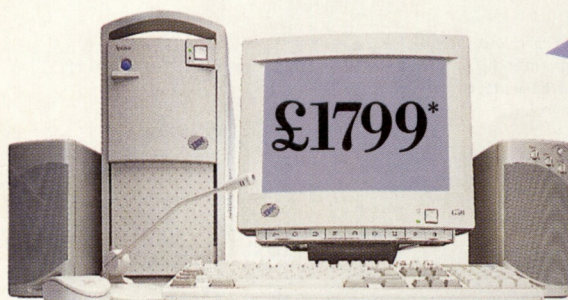
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A6PCZ0596A

Duncan Swain gets more joy per stick thanks to a new multi joystick adaptor from Gravis.

The Gravis GrIP

THERE'S NOTHING MORE ANNOYING than huddling around your PC to give your mates a damn good kicking in *FX Fighter*

only to find that half your controls don't work and someone who's never played before has you helpless on your backside before you can even say "Bugger this crap joystick splitter!".

Splitters are the most common way of getting round the problems associated with the joystick ports found on most PCs. The trouble lies with the fact that the ports are only really meant for one joystick at a time and are limited by the amount of pins in the port that act as contacts between the two. This means that plugging two joysticks into the port through a traditional splitter automatically halves the amount of pins each can use and therefore halves the functions available.

The Gravis GrIP, or Gravis Interface Protocol to give it its poncey full title, is basically a glorified splitter that promises to banish these woes by being able to handle instructions from up to four joypads or joysticks at once – as long as they are all Gravis GrIP pads. If you use non-Gravis pads or sticks the interface won't handle all the instructions; there are also two 15-pin analogue sockets for Gravis alternatives, although these will not give full GrIP functionality either.

Configurable for use with virtually any game and including standard set-ups for such titles as *Doom*, *Doom 2*, *Hexen*, *Heretic* and *Full Throttle* running under Windows 95, the GrIP is really intended for use with newer combat and sports games. You'll have to choose between wrestling and hockey to begin with, as the GrIP comes in two flavours: the Ultimate Fighting Machine comes

with
Acclaim's

WrestleMania, the Team Sports Set with EA's *NHL Hockey 96*.

All GrIPs are supplied with the interface itself along with two of Gravis' own eight-button joypads and is simple to set up. The GrIPKey drivers include a utility for Windows 95 which enables you to program your joypad controller buttons with a game's keyboard commands and will work with any game that runs under Windows 95, whether in a DOS window or not.

Looking ahead

According to Gravis all future Virgin and EA sports games will have built-in GrIP support; Team 17 are rumoured to be working on a racing game and *Worms 2* may well be GrIP compatible. The GrIP performed very well with *FX Fighter* and *FIFA '96*, both of which won't work with usual splitters – but then usual splitters don't carry the GrIP's price tag. Next up was *Resurrection: Rise 2*, which although is supposed to detect the GrIP, failed to do so – however, this may be down to the fact that we were using only a beta version of the game.

The GrIP does everything it says it will do, and seeing as it comes with a choice of two games the cost may seem reasonable – but for four-player games with full use of the controls, you'll need

to invest in another two Gravis joypads, which will add at least £40 to the overall price. All in all, it's an expensive add-on that's worth getting if you've got a spare wad to spend on something that at the end of the day is not very necessary. **Z**

Score

73

A great solution to the multi joystick problem.

Price: £99.99 inc VAT **Release Date:** Out now
Manufacturer: Gravis (Tel 0171-352 9402)
or Leisuresoft (Tel 01604 768711)

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

SoundBlaster AWE32 PnP



Creative Labs know a few things about making sound cards. Dave Mathieson checks out the latest addition to the range.

QUICKER READERS OUT THERE MAY well remember the days before sound cards. Fire a big machine gun – bleep. Launch a salvo of hard rockets – bleep blip. Fire a heat-seeker – hiss. Let's face it, if military hardware really did make these noises, global warfare would be a bit of a laugh, rather than something to be avoided at all costs. In the good old days, though, this was the best that your PC could manage. Amiga owners, on the other hand, had four-channel digital sound effects and smug expressions to match.

Some clever bloke at Creative Labs spotted this little discrepancy, scratched his chin in a sagely fashion, said "PCs have shit sound", and decided to invent the SoundBlaster. While these early efforts were all very ground-breaking, they could only manage one channel of 8-bit digital audio, and to call their

musical abilities 'primitive' would be something of an insult to cavemen everywhere. The SoundBlaster 16 sorted out the digital side of things with its 16-bit CD quality capabilities, but the music was still left to a cheesy-sounding FM chip.

What everyone really wanted was authentic sounding instruments, and the original AWE32 featured a General MIDI wavetable chip, enabling 'proper' sounding music. These days, wavetable cards are ten-a-penny (well, one-a-fifty-quid, actually), but where the AWE really stands out is as a tool for the budding musician. The reason for this is that you can load audio samples into the card's own RAM and mess about with them pretty much at will – thus gaining many of the capabilities of a sampler costing several hundred quid.

Plug and play: the theory

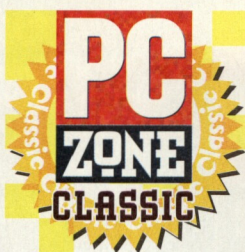
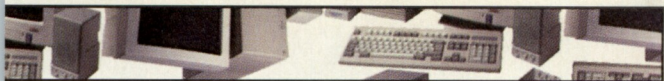
The AWE32 PnP is the plug and play version of the AWE32 (it's lucky you've got my techie know-how to hand, huh?). Plug and play means that, in theory, the sound card and your PC should get together and decide what settings to use, thus avoiding all those nasty IRQ conflicts that are such a pain to sort out. Note carefully, however, the 'in theory' bit. For plug and play to work, a couple of 'ifs' need to be satisfied. Most importantly, you need a compatible BIOS

fitted to your PC – you'll find that most of them are suitable (or at least claim to be). Secondly, plug and play is designed to work under Windows 95 (although the AWE also works with DOS and Windows 3.1).

Testing, testing...

The first PC that I tried the card out on had Windows 95 installed, but as it had a crappy old BIOS I didn't expect total plug and play-ness – which is lucky, because I didn't get it. Things looked lovely when I booted up the machine after plugging the card in, with helpful "New hardware detected, installing AWE32 drivers" type messages. After obediently bunging floppies in, I restarted Windows and surprise, surprise, it didn't work properly. MIDI playback was fine, but no digital audio – classic signs of dodgy IRQ settings. On an old-style sound card, these are set using jumper switches on the card itself, which is mucho hassle. The AWE32 PnP allows you to change these values in software. On checking them I found that they were all the same as those used by my old AWE32. Anyway, to cut a long and very exciting story short, the new sound card would only work under IRQ 7 and not 5, for some reason. By way of a happy ending, it worked fine on a PC with a newer BIOS.

However, straightforward installation isn't the primary reason for buying a sound card, it's how it performs in the sound department that counts – and the AWE32 PnP is just as good as its



predecessor in this respect. Most games these days support the AWE directly, and the wavetable sounds bring their soundtracks to life with plenty of thumpy-drums and nice deep basses. But as I mentioned earlier, the real strength of the AWE is as a musician's tool. The software

that's included enables you to sample instruments, loops, or whatever, and load them into the card's own memory (which can be upgraded using standard SIMMs). Combine this with a MIDI sequencer, and you have everything you need to create some fairly decent music, at a fraction of the cost of buying a separate General MIDI module and sampler.

If you already have an AWE32, there's probably not a lot of point in buying the plug and play version, and although it does come with newer drivers and 32-bit versions of software, it's essentially the same as the earlier version. On the other hand, if you have a cheapo card and you want the best on offer, the AWE32 PnP comes close. If you also fancy yourself as a master of drum 'n' bass, then get one. **Z**

Score

90

The best all-round sound card for the gamer and skint musician.

Price: £234 inc VAT **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Creative Labs
Tel: 01734 344744



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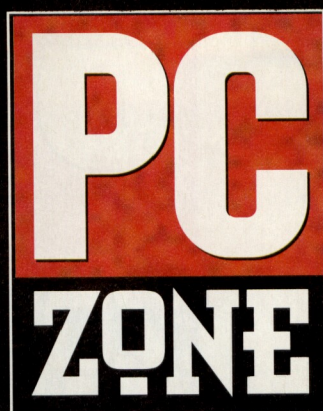
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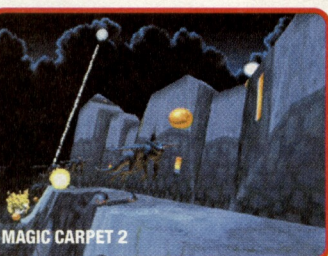
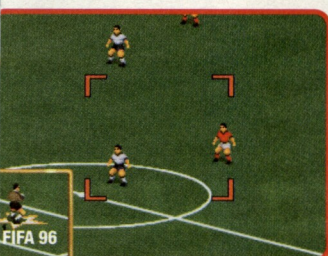
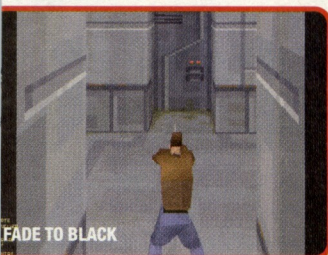
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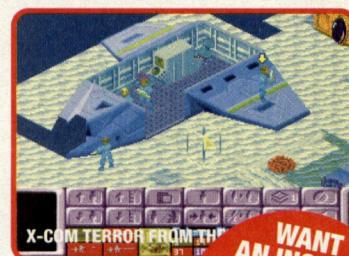
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GAME - AND GET PLAYING!



If you want help with problems like ingrowing toenails or disputes with your girlfriend you're out of luck as they don't come under The Boggit's field of expertise – not that he'd give you any assistance anyway, 'cos as we all know by now he's a miserable cantankerous sod who likes nothing better than upsetting people...



TROUBLESHOOTER



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READ THIS!

Because our tips line is so busy, and because the man who answers the phone is only a mere mortal we need you to prove that you have actually bought the magazine and that you're not just a freeloading blagger. To do this, our tips geezer will ask you for a password before you request your tip. This month's password is... "Izzy wizzy, let's get busy".



Ishar 3

I've been to see the astronomer and then the Wizard, and I've found the racoon. The problem is that when I go looking for the ingredients to mix in the magic flask, I can't find the kelsonia powder.

In exchange for this information I have some cheats for Ishar 2 and 3 which give you full life points:

For Ishar 2 hold down <CTRL/ALT/V> at the same time. For Ishar 3 hold down the same keys, but also click the left mouse button while the pointer is at the left-hand side of the screen.

Graham Carmichael, Hull

While I don't believe in cruelty to furry animals (probably because I'm a bit on the hairy side myself), you must in this case take the racoon's parchment from him. But don't worry, because he can't read and he would only have used it for toilet paper anyway. Go back to Mather's place and pick up a key. Go to the new house shown on the map and find a pendant and a flask. Wear the pendant and then go to the inn called The Kelsonia Tasters, which you'll find along the southern ramparts of the Rich town. Listen, then pick up the powder.

I'll accept your cheats, although Boggit's Mailbag isn't really the place for such underhand practices – we like to save that sort of information for the 'Sad Gits Section', otherwise known as The Hackmasters.

Lands Of Lore

I'm at the entrance of the Urbish Mines and I can't seem to get in, no matter what I do. I've tried all the magic spells which my characters have, including two fireball wands.

R Ferguson, Scotland

HEX	DECIMAL
09H	09
0AH	10
0FH	15
10H	16
20H	32
28H	40
32H	50
40H	64
63H	99
64H	100
C8H	200
FAH	250
FFH	255

Write to PC Zone

If you have a query concerning a role-playing game or adventure, or you have a hot tip or a cheat to share, then write to:

**The Boggit
29 Blackthorn Drive
Larkfield, Aylesford
KENT ME20 6NR**

Having heard tales of Scottish adventurers who spent years trying to find a back way into the Gents rather than put a penny in the slot, I checked first of all that entrance to the Urbish Mines is free. However, in this case I think that you're missing an essential item. In the west side of Upper Opinwood you must look for a chest which contains a green skull – this skull is the only item which can kill the horrible monster which guards the entrance to the mines. Simply pass the skull over the character's face to kill the slug.

While we're on the subject of this game I'll help out those readers who have written to ask how to get to Draracles Lair in the caves. For a start, you must locate and keep the jewelled dagger from the chest on Level 2; you'll find this by using old daggers in a niche in the wall. On Level 4 you must inspect the walls carefully to find a place where it looks a bit beaten-up. Use the sledgehammer to smash your way through to the stairs which lead back to Level 3 and Draracles Lair. You'll need the jewelled dagger or silver goblet to get the riddle scroll.

Noctropolis

Aaaaahhhh... Noctropolis, that constant supplier of digitised video conversations and (ahem) 'non-linear' gameplay. But hark! Do I hear that familiar scream of "Help-I-don't-know-what-to-do-next-as-there's-nothing-here-to-help-me-in-this-crap-game!" Yes, I can hear it quite clearly, which is hardly surprising since I'm the one screaming to it.

I've just finished talking to the Whisperman, who says that Flux is in the top of the Sunspire Tower, I must destroy him, and the traditional entry to the tower is not an option. It's no



good – I just can't find any entry, let alone a traditional one.

What do I do next?

Andrew Kennedy, Inverness

We're about to get into superhero mode, so get ready to adjust your underpants. Head for the elevator in the Cygnus building, and once inside use the logbook (which you should have picked up in the observatory) to move the elevator to the roof. You must now use the hook (from the butcher's shop) on a cable which stretches between the Cygnus building and the Sunspire Tower to carry out a death slide across the gap. Watch you don't fall! On the other hand though, if you do, look left – it's a lovely view.

Alone In The Dark

I've collected two mirrors and come across the two winged monsters which are blocking the stairs, but I can't get past them. I've tried using the mirrors as the book which you pick up suggests, but nothing seems to work.

Stephen Jones, Shrewsbury

It's easy! As they say, beauty is in the eye of the beholder... Simply place the mirrors on both of the statues in the corners to show the monsters just how ugly they are and they'll die of embarrassment.

Legend Of Kyrandia

My problem lies with the potions. What are the ingredients that I need and how do I create them? After that, how do I get the chalice back from the sneaky little arsehole who steals it from me?

J Cale, Redhill

A flower and a gemstone of the same colour will usually produce a potion of that shade. You can make red, yellow, green and blue potions, although sometimes you need to travel quite a distance to find the gems and flowers. However, by going to the woods just behind Zanthia's place you can find the crystals of alchemy which help you to mix different coloured potions together to get even more. You can mix red and blue potions to get purple as well as red and yellow to get orange; yellow and blue gives a poisonous green mixture. As for retrieving the chalice, you'll find that the purple potion has the same effect on your body as cold water has on your genitals. Take a sip and then you'll be able to walk through that little door in the tree trunk – you might have a limp though. (A limp what? – Ed.)

(Above) It looks like something spooky is going on in *Noctropolis*...



Close your eyes and look no further if you are a noble Avatar, for things are about to get downright sneaky. On the other hand though, if you're a no-good, underhanded sonofabitch... Hi there! Welcome to the fun side of computer gaming!

Destruction Derby

To turn off car damage during the race, use the name '!DAMAGE!' when you start the championship.

Championship Manager 2

To become an International manager without having to earn the right, select any team you want, then when you're asked to enter your name, enter the real manager's name:

England – Terry Venables; Scotland – Craig Brown; Rep of Ireland – Jack Charleton; N. Ireland – Brian Hamilton; Wales – Bobby Gould.

(Hint supplied by A Truong)

Command & Conquer

Here's a cunning cheat for those playing this game over a network or modem.

Build two silos, but only place one of them. Wait until the first silo is almost full of tiberium then place the second and sell the first. The computer will give you all of the money for the tiberium which was held in the first silo and then it will transfer the same tiberium into the second.

Crusader

On the first mission there is a room to the north-east of the one where you first take control of a servo-mech – it has a health station and a teleport pad in it. A post-pad is just outside which opens and closes the door. Every time the door opens, a guard teleports into the room. This guard, who is carrying ammo and credits, can easily be killed and so provides a simple method of building up your resources before moving on.

(Hint supplied by Carls Ruiz)

Duke Nukem 3D

This game has got to be the best thing on the PC at the moment. Apart from the fact that the screen movement can make you feel a bit seasick after about half an hour, the action and graphics make it the game to be playing.

Of course only a low-down dog would cheat to finish a level, but if you really are the scumbag that all your friends

(Right) We make *Duke Nukem 3D* easy for you with our cheat codes!



say you are, then here's the list of codes you're going to need:

dnstuff	Receive all weapons, full ammunition, plus all items
dncornholio OR	
dnkroz	God mode
dnitems	Receive all key cards
dnscotty##	Game/level warp (# = game, # = level)
dnhyper	Receive steroid boost
dnrate	Game frame rate (try 25+)
dnview	View from behind Duke
dnskill#	Change skill level to #
dncashman	Throw money when spacebar pressed
dnallen	Displays "Buy Major Stryker" message
dnbeta	Displays "Pirates Suck" message
dncosmo	Displays "Register Cosmo" message

Navy Strike

- Follow the rules of engagement. It's very easy to blow away an aircraft with long range missiles before you can even see it, it could well be a civilian airliner.
- Be aware of your height at all times. The aircraft can dive and climb between sea level and 40,000ft in under one. If you're in a steep dive pull out of it before 6000ft.

- If you're confused and out of control, use the auto-pilot command to level you out then switch back to manual control.

- Keep an eye on the AA missile/SAM warning lights. If they light up, pump chaff and flares.

- Use the long range missiles to lock on to your target. Combined with the padlock view option this should allow you to zero-in on the enemy extremely quickly – but remember to switch back to cannons for warning shots.

- Engaging flaps will greatly improve manoeuvring, but at the cost of stability and speed. Useful for those sharp turns in dogfights.

- Using air brakes will help slow you down in a fair hurry, especially when combined with flaps.

- When intercepting, position yourself behind and slightly above your target. That way when you receive permission to attack you're ready for the kill.

- Go easy on the afterburners. If you do find yourself with no fuel, press <E> to switch to your spare tank.

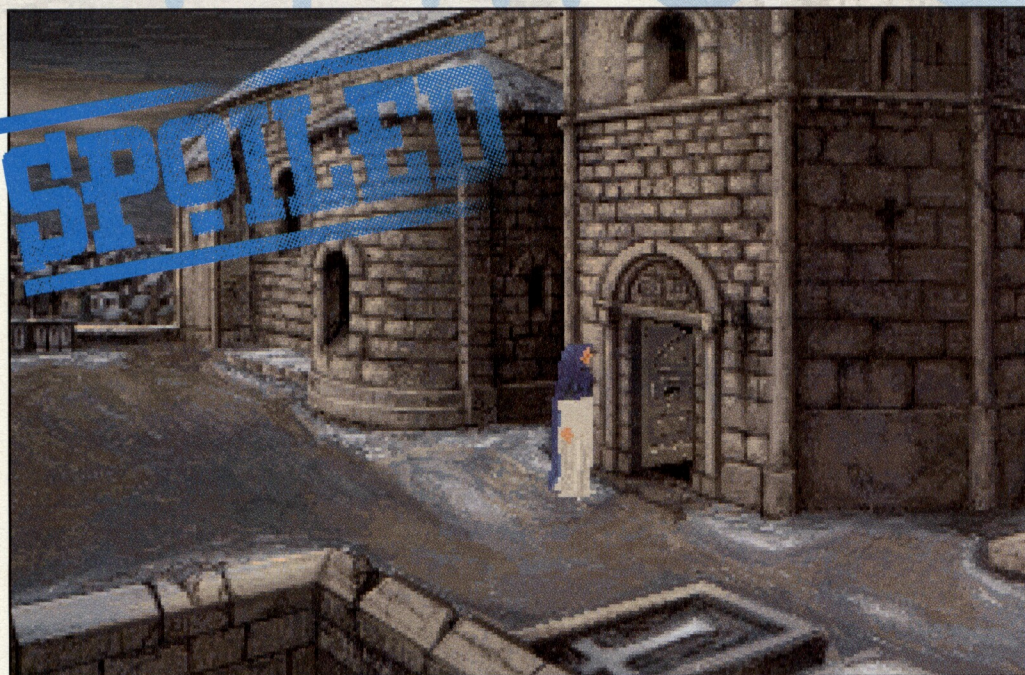
(Compiled by Mahendra and Simon)

Thanks to everyone who has written in recently; although there isn't enough room to answer all your letters, I do appreciate and read every one of them.

THE TRUE PLAYERS™

The year is 1329, and things are not so good. From the mists of time comes a desperate cry for help from the last of the Knights Templar – and it's down to you to save him...

Time Gate



(Above) Dispose of all the zombies in the graveyard to reveal the object which unlocks the door to the tower.

Museum entrance

Enter the museum and go to the room where the Japanese film crew are busy working. Pick up the headphones from the top of the chest, then leave. Enter the room at the opposite side of the hall and get the sword and shield. Look at the large picture to hear a tale. Go next door to the ticket office.

Offices

Take both the catapult and compact disc off the desk.

Now go to the side of the computer and plug it in. Use the CD with the computer – you'll find that you automatically use the headphones.

Go next door to the director's office.

Search the desk drawers to find a key, magnetic card and a magazine. Head back towards the main hall.

On your way back you'll find the laser alarm has been activated. The path to follow is straight across to the opposite wall, first moving to the centre, then heading back around the furniture to the opposite side, then straight across. Follow this far wall to the door.

Entrance hall

Grab a screwdriver from the toolbox and use it to open the door to the room where you found the headphones. Get the foam (not the water) extinguisher. Return to the entrance hall and use the key on the large grey control box. Use the foam extinguisher on the opened panel to disable the alarms.

Move into the room to the left of the control box and arm yourself with the sword and shield to fight the knight. Open the showcase with the magnetic card and take the ammunition for the catapult. Head for the doorway of the next room and use the catapult. The trick is now to move the

remote-controlled catapult through the laser beams to a point directly in front of the alarm cut-off switch. Begin by going to the bottom of the screen, along the wall to the middle then out into the centre, and forward – you'll know when you've reached the correct spot as you will receive a message telling you that you are correctly positioned. Arm the catapult and fire it.

Once inside the room you can pick up another sword. Leave and enter the garden, where you must use the sword to kill another knight. Pick up the hologram which is lying nearby, then walk around until two men appear. Approach the man who is seated in the centre of the garden and you will be overcome and tossed down the well.

The past

Pick up the lute, throw it to the other cell. Stand behind the guard when he appears and kick him – he will stumble forward and be disposed of. Pick up the key which the other prisoner throws to you and escape from your cell. Enter the opposite cell and pick up the water jug. Kill the next guard and get his keys. Go near the guard room to activate the next guard and kill him as well.

Enter the guard room, pick up the wine and drink it. Leave and use the keys to open the large metal gate to the stairway. At the top of the stairs move out of the path of the blind man, then when he has gone search the fireplace to find another key. Open the locked door and quickly move past the ram to get the shepherd's crook and sheepskin waistcoat. Go next door and get the ham, bottle and bucket. Return to the previous room and fill the bucket by using it on the tank of water.

Return to the room with the fire and use the water to put it out. Now go to the left of the fireplace until the view changes; use the 'investigate' option on the fireplace to make your hero duck inside and climb up the chimney.

Face the rope and use the waistcoat (which makes you use the shepherd's crook!); this will take you over the gap. Go through the left-hand exit, then go immediately left, following a beam into



a doorway. Go right; you'll find yourself above a sleeping monk. Use your staff to hook the monk's habit. Go straight through the room and turn right to a dead end. At this point you can safely jump off the beam to the ground.

Cross room

Open and search the box on the wall to find a book and a hologram. Push the cross to open a secret door to the writing room.

The writing room

Search the table to find an empty pot, a pot of water, a pot of bone black, a pot of spleen and a pot of pitch. Go to the back of the room and search the desk to find a stileto. Climb the stairs to find the quill on the desk and a writing box from the cupboard. Go to the writing desk (second from the back of the room) and use the book to place it on the desk.

Use the stileto on the book to find a gem, and the water, spleen and bone black to fill the empty pot with ink. Now move in front of the piece of paper on the desk, and use the ink and quill to create a copy of the book. Now 'use' the monk's habit to wear it. Pick up the book.

Warning – the following sequence is being timed, so move your ass!

Go back to the room with the cross, stand before the open box and drop both the book and the writing box. (This should return both items inside in the box.) Return to the writing room and push the torch on the wall to open the door. When the monk appears, follow him closely – if you move too far away



from him you will be killed by the guard. Follow the monk around the courtyard until you come to a closed door, located on your right. (You will get a message at the appropriate time.) Go right and enter the hospital.

The hospital

Turn left and pick up the pot which is lying beside the locked door. Throw the pot to smash it open and reveal the key to the locked door. Enter the room and collect: an empty test tube, badger hair, nux vomical, herbs and toad's spittle. Pick up the book from the table and read it to get the formula. Use all of the ingredients you have collected to fill the test tube. Leave and find the leather cutter in the shoe workshop.

Search the bakery to find two loaves of bread. Use the test tube to turn one of the loaves green. Enter the Templar's cell and throw the green loaf to put the prisoner to sleep. Use the leather cutter on the statue to obtain a ruby. Prepare yourself with a sword then leave the cell to fight the two guards which appear. The second guard will drop keys which

(Above) Controlling your pixel warrior can be confusing because of some of the odd camera angles you're given, so try and move him to a spot where you have the best view of the action before you have to start swinging your weapon.

(Above left) Enter our hero, William Tibbs. Handsome, witty and built like a Parisian pisseur. He may not be smart, but he can't half lift heavy weights.

you must collect to open the door to the mortuary. Push the corpse to reveal a golden heart. Leave the room and travel around the hospital corridor entering each room to search for statues. Use the leather cutter on all of the statues to gather seven gems; you should find an onyx, amethyst, emerald, plus three diamonds from the room next to the bakery. Drink and eat to top up your health to a maximum. Return to the mortuary and use the gold heart on the statue; at this point another statue will appear at the opposite end of the room. Quickly move to the new statue and examine it to reveal a potion which you will automatically drink and fall asleep.

The torture chamber

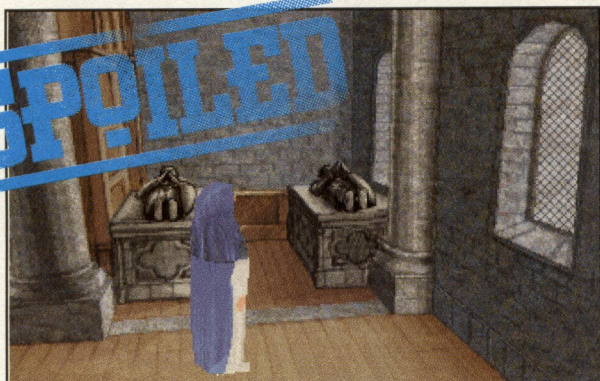
Move the right cursor arrow to rotate the wheel and escape. Kick the guard to kill him (it can be done!). Take the ring and red stone from the table. Swap the two flaming torches to open a secret door. Inside the corridor take the first left to meet an old warrior – use the ring to identify yourself as a good guy. Pick up everything, then open the chest. While you are being viewed by Wolfram, dazzle him using the strange red object and the leather bag. Search the chalice to obtain nine gems. Use the ring to open a way out of the cell. But before proceeding, wear the monk's robe.



(Below) Escaping from your torture cell ain't really so tough. Swing the wheel and see what fortune brings.



SPOILED



« The library

Use kicks and punches to fight and kill the monk who is waiting for you. Walk around the room to find the two tombs. Use the ruby and the crystal gem on the tombs to receive a knife and a health potion – drink the potion if you need it. Go through the double doors to the banqueting hall and quickly pick up and use the pile of plates to prevent the guard from killing you.

Go to the kitchen and then into the pantry, where again you must kill a monk/demon using kicks and punches. Use the onyx and emerald on the two tombs to receive a weapon and a key. Use the key to open the door to the garden. Run past the zombies to the two tombs at the far end. Use the amethyst and opal on the sides of the tombs to receive an axe and chain mail. Wear the chain mail and use the axe to kill the zombie. Arm yourself with the crucifix to fight the green monster. Pick up the ghoul's tooth that the green monster leaves behind and use it to open the door to the tower.

The tower

Push the statue which is on the right of the screen to open a secret door in the entrance alcove. Go through the door and make your way back to the torture chamber and then through to the jail. Kill the guard to get a key, and then use it to open Julia's cell. Take care here because Julia will turn 'nasty', so quickly run back to the torture chamber and then follow your old route through the Templar's cell and up the stairs to the library again (at the same time dodging any demons on the way). The main doors to the garden will now be

(Below) And here she is... your 'Blind Date' for tonight! Juliet's hobbies include hanging around in prison cells, and biting the heads off foolish heroes.



open. Arm yourself and kill the guard who stands before the open door to the castle. Enter the castle and examine the pictures to find number VII. Push the painting to open a door.

Kill the black knight and make sure that you pick up the bracelet he drops. Climb the stairs and pick up the first weight you find. Face the bell rope and use the weight to gain entrance to the roof. Use a diamond on the tomb to get a horn. You will now be captured.

The church

As soon as your cell is unlocked run to the table and pick up everything on it. Run quickly to the small chapel at the far end of the church which contains a large cross. Use the horn in order to be transformed into a Bird Knight. Fight and kill the executioner. Push the cross to open a door at the other end of the church. Make your way to the stained glass window and go through to a ledge up on the roof. Now you have to kill the knight by beating him off the ledge where there is a break in the small wall. Note that you can't actually kill him in a straight fight – use a move forward, overhead strike, move forward kind of technique to force him backwards.

Once back inside, push the unlit torch beside the double doors to open them. Climb the stairs inside and use the crucifix on the

statue to open a secret compartment in the central pillar. Push the small font inside the compartment to open a secret door downstairs in the church. Go to the secret door – opposite the chapel – and enter it. Collect all items from the shelves, plus a torch from the fireplace. Read the book on the table for the formula. Make the potion by using the lead beads, tin, lustral water and antimony in that order. Arm yourself with the torch and use it as in fighting mode to destroy the pentacle.

Stand next to the closed book on the statue and use the potion. Pick up the Templar seal from the wall. Now use the bucket and rope, then use it on the well to get water. Once you've got the water, use it on Juliet to wake her. Use kicks and punches to destroy the demon. Go back to the stained glass window and push the large cross to a position halfway along the balcony – in front of the stained glass window – where it will fall and kill Wolfram.

And that's it, you're very nearly a hero – now all that's left is for you to use the Templar seal and the glove to win the day! **Z**



BUYERS' GUIDE

Welcome to the all-singing, all-dancing **PC Zone** Buyers Guide, which is to gaming what the BR timetable is to trainspotters. You name it, it's here – painstakingly compiled by our very own engine driver.

Issue 11 – February 1994

Advantage Tennis

(55) Infogrames – Sport £35.99
Unexciting tennis game that lacks punch.

Alone In The Dark 2

(97: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £39.99
Absolutely brilliant! Without a doubt what the PC was made for.

B-Wing

(72) US Gold – Space Sim £19.99
Your sister either fancied Han Solo or Luke Skywalker. You'll either fancy B-Wing or, er, something else.

Capitol Hill (CD)

(75) Software Toolworks – Edutainment £39.99
Comprehensive introduction to American politics.

Chessmaster 4000 Turbo

(90: Classic) Mindscape – Chess £34.99
Tough opponent: gentle teacher.

Critical Path (CD)

(72) Media Vision – Adventure £49.99
Slick and atmospheric but way too short.

Dungeon Hack

(62) SSI – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Not enough there. Not enough design options. Not enough gameplay. For very hardened and grizzled role-players only.

Fire And Ice

(75) Renegade – Platform Game £29.99
A fun but difficult game, marred only by an over-inflated price and ridiculous copy protection.

Flight Sim Toolkit

(80: Recommended) Domark – Simulation £49.99
Recommended, but only if you find *Stunt Island* limiting. It can be very heavy going.

Global Domination

(65) Impressions – Strategy £39.99
Slick, addictive strategy game but it presents no long term challenge.

Goblins 3

(75) Coktel Vision – Puzzle Game £39.99
Good for beginners and a pleasant diversion for seasoned adventurers.

Kingmaker

(88: Recommended) US Gold – Board Game £37.99
Without doubt the best board game conversion for a long, long time.

Magic Boy

(60) Empire – Platform Game £25.99
Not very 'magic' at all.

Master of Orion

(72) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
A good one for all the accountants out there.

Rebel Assault

(93: Classic) LucasArts – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
It's *Star Wars*. It's also the most important game to date.

Striker

(55) Elite – Sport £29.99
Another Paul Bodin penalty of the games-playing world.

Subwar 2050

(88: Recommended) MicroProse – Simulation £44.99

Easily the best 'fun' simulation that MicroProse have produced.

The Labyrinth Of Time

(89: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Adventure £39.99

Beautiful, alluring, a touch slow and a little fussy. A quite superb adventure though.

The Terminator Rampage

(75) Bethesda Softworks – Arcade £39.99
Okay, but once you've seen *Doom*, you'll laugh in *Rampage's* face and spill its pint.

VGA Planets

(70) PAW PBM – Role-Playing Game £24.99
A rather interesting type of RPG that takes some time, but is generally worth the wait.

Issue 12 – March 1994

Campaign

(52) Empire – Strategy £39.99
Dim-witted attempt at simulating armoured action – too buggy to recommend, despite colourful graphics and arcade sequences.

Championship Manager '94

(80: Recommended) Domark – Sport £29.99
It's still the best (just).

Championship Manager Italia

(80: Recommended) Domark – Sport £29.99
It's the best too, just with a few more noughts at the end of the transfer figures.

Combat Classics 2

(50) Empire – Flight Sim Compendium £34.99
Sadly, this compilation contains one classic and two rather second-rate duds.

Companions Of Xanth

(73) Accolade – Adventure £39.99
Awful puns. Questionable humour. Very *Monkey Island*-esque. What more could you want from an adventure?

Cyber Race

(64) Cyberdreams – Racing £44.99
Mildly entertaining for a quick blast, but that's about it.

Fury Of The Furries

(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Puzzle/Platform Game £39.99

A rivetting platform puzzler, but not for the easily frustrated.

Gabriel Knight

(92: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
Brilliant and frightening offering from Sierra.

Genesis

(83: Recommended) Mindscape – Strategy £34.99
A little bit of *Populous*, a little bit of *Civilization*.

Hand Of Fate

(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £39.99
You've got to hand it to Westwood, this is a bit of a stunner.

Heirs To The Throne

(43) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
If I got this kind of quality from a PD game I'd be blinking well complain.

Indianapolis 500

(65) Hit Squad – Driving £14.99
A once-great giant succumbs to the ravages of time.

Leisure Suit Larry 6

(75) Virgin Interactive – Adventure £35.99
The best *Larry* yet; but he's getting way past his sell-by date.

Litil Divil

(90: Classic) Gremlin Graphics – Puzzle Game £39.99
An excellent puzzle game with wit and flair.

Police Quest 4: Open Season

(78) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
A thoroughly professional job for those who can think and click at the same time.

Premier Challenge

(78) T'ai Chi – Sport £24.99
Design your own game. Boost this score.

Premier Manager 2

(65) Gremlin Graphics – Sport £34.99
It's better, but still too obsessed with interior decorating for my liking.

Shadow Of Darkness

(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
A compelling storyline, but dull battle scenes.

The Incredible Toons

(82: Recommended) Dynamix – Puzzle Game £39.99
Zany, silly and highly addictive.

Issue 13 – April 1994

Archon Ultra

(78) US Gold – Strategy £39.99
More beat 'em up than strategy.

Beneath A Steel Sky

(83: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Flight Sim £39.99

Graphically good and pleasingly puzzling jaunt that you'll feel like returning to.

Conspiracy

(67) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99

Takes all the fun out of Ruskie bashing.

D-Day

(38) US Gold – Wargame £35.99
D-Day lies bleeding in the no man's land of wargames.

Daemonsgate

(45) Gametek – Role-Playing Game £29.99
Out-dated, tedious and visually vestigial.

Doom

(96: Classic) id Software – Arcade £34.99
The best arcade game and also the best multi-player game ever. *Doom* is the best. Need we say more?

Hired Guns

(77) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Ishar 2 with robots.

Hot Sound And Vision

(85: Recommended) Interplay – General Interest £44.99
An outstanding collection.

Interplay's 10 Year Anthology

(85: Recommended) Interplay – Compendium £49.99
A cost-effective way to build an instant library of classic games.

Micro Machines

(70) Codemasters – Arcade £29.99
A good two-player game (if you have a decent PC, that is).

Mortal Kombat

(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Beat 'Em Up £29.99

Not as good as the SNES *Street Fighter II*, but the best on the PC.

Nomad

(78) Gametek – Space Strategy £29.99
Good game if you're more into exploring than fighting.

Pinball Fantasies

(80: Recommended) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball £37.95

The meanest machine of them all – a worthy successor to the original *Pinball Dreams*.

Reunion

(80: Recommended) Grandslam – Strategy £TBA
Reunion has something for everyone.

Sim City 2000

(92: Classic) Maxis – Strategy £39.99
Brilliant game that'll make you anally retentive in the extreme.

Star Trek: 25th Anniversary

(86: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure £49.99
A game boldly going where it's been before, just a little more vocally.

Strike Commander (CD)

(86: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99

Superior flight sim, but you need the hardware to match.

The Complete UMS

(58) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Both classics in their day, the two UMS games are a bit too long in the tooth to excite anyone but the real enthusiast.

The Lawnmower Man

(77) Sales Curve Interactive – Arcade £54.99
Excellent presented. Just a little more complexity in the gameplay and it would have been unreservedly recommended.

Winter Olympics

(64) US Gold – Sport £42.99
Has its moments, but you'll probably play it for a few hours and thereafter pick it up once a year if you get really bored.

Wizard

(73) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
A good stepping stone into the land of RPGs.

Issue 14 – May 1994

Air Transport Pilot (CD)

(70) RC Simulations – Simulation £79.95
Well, it's not really our idea of fun, but it's a reasonable effort for a simulation of this type.

Airlines

(20) Kompart (UK) Ltd – Strategy £39.99
Ugly, fiddly and totally boring.

Arena: The Elder Scrolls

(62) Bethesda Softworks – Role-Playing Game £45.99

Disappointing really.

Award Winner Gold Edition

(88: Recommended) Empire – Arcade £34.99
Superb quality games with unrivalled value for money. Buy it now!

Battle Isle 2

(91: Classic) Blue Byte – Strategy £54.99
Without a shadow of a doubt, this is the strategy game of the year.

Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space (CD)

(95: Classic) Interplay – Strategy £39.99
A stunning improvement on an already classic game.

Cannon Fodder

(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade/Strategy £34.99

Great fun for all the wrong and right reasons.

CD-ROM Challenge Pack

(75) Software Toolworks – Compendium £39.99
Reasonably good compilation, but there are better ones around.

Championship Manager For Windows

(79) Domark – Sport £29.99
A wasted opportunity. Not as good as the DOS version.

D/Generation

(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £19.99
Probably the best game that *Windows* users have ever played.

Excellent Games

(85: Recommended) Beau Jolly – Various £39.99
Great games at a great price. A compilation not to be missed, including *Populous 2*, *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*, *Car And Driver* and *Robocod*.

Fantastic Dizzy

(50) Codemasters – Platform Game £9.99
What can we say? Wrong time. Wrong format. Wrong price.

Gabriel Knight (CD)

(90: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure Game £44.99
Brooding, atmospheric thriller.

In Extremis

(67) US Gold – Arcade £37.99
You'll shriek! You'll shout! You'll yawn!

Johnny Quest

(12) Software Business – Arcade/Adventure £29.99
Can basically be summed up in one word – dreadful.

Megarace

(65) Mindscape – Racing £39.99
A superb demonstration of what can be done graphically with CD-ROM... and how easy it is for gameplay to suffer as a result.

Merchant Prince

(82: Recommended) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Don't let the dodgy graphics fool you. If you give this game half a chance, we reckon you'll be hooked.

Microcosm

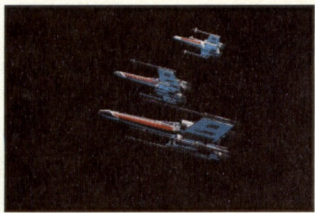
(70) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
Brilliant graphics and excellent sound. Let down by limited gameplay.

NFL Pro League Football

(50) Digital Integration – Sport £39.99
As a play-editor it's okay, but playing the game itself is disappointing.

Privateer: Righteous Fire

(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Add-On £19.99
Privater fans definitely won't be disappointed with this one.



(Left) *X-Wing*: groove on down to the old 'destroy the Death Star, save the croissant-haired princess' tune.

Seawolf

(83: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99
A highly atmospheric sub sim with a control interface from hell.

Starlord

(70) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
It could have been excellent. Could have been. Damn!

The Patrician (CD)

(70) Daze Marketing – Strategy £39.99
A good game on disk, slightly better on CD.

The Red Crystal

(43) Mirage – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Don't ask your friends to play this if you want to keep them.

Unnecessary Roughness

(66) Accolade – Sport £39.99
Best described as 'all right'. It's as good as most American footy sims.

Issue 15 – June 1994

Bloodnet

(75) MicroProse – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Hindered by outdated implementation, but still well worth a look.

Carriers At War II

(63) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
For die-hard strategy aficionados.

Darkseed

(90: Classic) Cyberdreams – Adventure £44.99
If you have a taste for the macabre, you'll never forget the *Darkseed* affair.

Diggers

(40) Millennium – Puzzle Game £34.99
Mind-numbingly tedious.

Disney Animation Studio

(75) Infogrames – General Interest £99.99
More serious approach with superb sample animations that you can't use!

Dragonsphere

(69) MicroProse – Adventure £39.99
A beautiful adventure game that won't tax your brain too heavily.

Evasive Action

(40) Mindscape – Simulation £34.99
Oh, so very close, but it's got more bugs than Watergate.

F1

(40) Domark – Sport £29.99
The champions of sport produce yet another world-beater.

Fleet Defender

(86: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99
Heavyweight flight sim, both helped and hindered by over-clever graphics.

Hanna-Barbera Animation Workshop

(75) Empire – General Interest £49.99
Tries to make everything fun and encourages you to try out other methods of animation.

Hornet Naval Strike Fighter

(80: Recommended) Spectrum Holobyte – Flight Sim
As that well known saying goes: 'If you like Falcon 3, you'll just love *Hornet*.'

Myst

(67) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
Surreal and atmospheric, if not realistic.

Pacific Strike

(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99

Miles better than *Strike Commander* but requires a state-of-the-art ninja PC.

Pagan: Ultima VII

(78) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Without doubt a love/hate relationship for *Ultima* purists.

Ravenloft

(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £45.99
A playable and accessible RPG.

Red Hell

(60) Cyberdreams – Adventure £39.99
The graphics are poor and the control system is dire. Avoid it.

RedShift

(95: Classic) Maris Multimedia Ltd – General Interest £89.00
Stunning program which will be hard to beat.

Sabre Team

(60) Krisalis – Strategy £29.99
This has all been done before, and done much better as well.

Shadowcaster

(70) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Considerable enhancements for CD but the gameplay remains the same.

Spaceship Warlock

(70) Reactor/Ubisoft – Adventure £44.99
Very slick, very polished. The gameplay's a bit limited but it's fun all the same.

TFX

(80: Recommended) Ocean – Simulation £44.99
Great game with totally superfluous bells and whistles.

UFO Enemy Unknown

(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Brilliantly designed, perfectly implemented and totally absorbing.

Washington DC Scenery

(85: Recommended) Supervision – Flight Sim Add-On £39.99
One of the best flight sim add-ons to date.

Issue 16 – July 1994

Castles II

(65) Interplay – Strategy £49.95
Interplay usually releases excellent games – this isn't one of them.

Comanche (CD)

(90: Classic) Optima – Flight Sim £49.99
Brilliant action-packed helicopter simulation at a great price on CD.

Companions Of Xanth (CD)

(84: Recommended) Accolade – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Great game on disk. Even better on CD.

Corridor 7

(55) Gametek – Arcade £19.99
Nothing new or exciting.

Detroit

(85: Recommended) Impressions – Strategy Game £39.99
An intriguing strategy/sim which boasts both originality and playability.

Dragon's Lair

(67) Elite Systems – Adventure £39.99
An interactive cartoon that's more 'cartoon' than 'interactive'.

Eye Of The Storm

(40) Rebellion – Space/Strategy £39.99
SSI cruises easily to the head of the fleet with this simply stunning sim.

Great Naval Battles 2

(86: Recommended) US Gold – Simulation £45.99
SSI cruises easily to the head of the fleet with this simply stunning sim.

Hand Of Fate (CD)

(78) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £49.99
Good game, shame about the conversion. In this case, more equals less.

Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition

(85: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99
A good golf game at an amazing price.

Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker

(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Sport £14.99
Dangerously addictive snooker sim.

Lucky's Casino Adventure

(60) Mirage – Card Game £44.99
Challenging, fun, totally addictive but a bit pricey.

Lure Of The Temptress

(55) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99
Old and fading.

Power Game 2 (CD)

(70) Activision – Simulation £29.99
Worth looking at if you don't have the hardware to run the latest sim.

Robinson's Requiem

(85: Recommended) Daze Marketing – RPG £39.99
This is a highly original and addictive 'survival sim' which, unfortunately, has some annoying bits.

Sam And Max Hit The Road

(93: Classic) US Gold – Adventure £45.99
Brilliantly original, a highly humorous jaunt.

Sim City Classic

(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £16.99
Still a great game but check out *Sim City 2000* first.

Sim City Enhanced

(82: Recommended) Interplay – Strategy £49.99
Sim City's an excellent game but so quid is a bit steep for a few enhancements.

Sleepwalker

(45) Hit Squad – Platform Game £9.99
Third-rate platformer. Stay well away from it.

Space Hulk

(87: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99
Still a tremendous game, but not as good as the disk-based version.

Summer Challenge & Winter Challenge

(80: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99
Good compilation, great value.

The Horde

(87: Recommended) US Gold – Strategy/Arcade Game £44.99
Not an original concept but extremely well implemented.

The Rock 'n' Roll Years – The '50s

(70) Supervision – General Interest £24.99
Handy for 50's music lovers or as a reference – but we doubt if it'll get you rockin' round the clock.

The Settlers

(89: Recommended) Blue Byte – Strategy £39.99
A damn fine, engrossing game.

Theatre Of War

(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £12.99
Excellent strategy game and it looks cool, too.

UFO

(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Our Chris's favourite, this is an incredibly addictive strategy game.

Wembley Rugby League

(66) Audiogenic – Sport £29.99
This manages to be quite an improvement on previous rugby games.

Wolfpack

(60) Optima – Strategy £29.99
Disappointingly average.

World Cup Challenge

(48) Winsport – Sport £29.95
Disappointing, absurdly RAM-hungry and limited in its playing life.

Issue 17 – August 1994

1942: Pacific Air War

(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99
Two great games – *Carrier Battles* and *Task Force 1942* – in one package. It's a winner!

AI Quaddim: The Genie's Curse

(40) US Gold/SSI – Role-Playing Game £35.99
The thinking amoeba's beat 'em up.

Burntime

(43) Max Design – Strategy £39.99
Hey, it's just like being there.

Cool Spot

(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Platform Game £29.99
Charm and accessibility save it from being strictly seventies-up!

Delta V

(64) Bethesda Softworks – Shoot 'Em Up £45.99
Very fast and pretty stunning to look at, but it won't keep you up into the night.

Dinosaur Detective Agency

(42) Alternative Software – Platform Game £16.99
Cheap – but that's no reason to be cheerful.

Empire Soccer

(57) Empire – Sport £29.99
Let down by small viewing area, unintelligent player reactions and poor scrolling.

Good To Firm

(50) New Era Software – Sport £29.99
Horse-racing fanatics might get something out of it, but the experience will pall.

International Tennis Open

(88: Recommended) Philips Interactive Media – Sport £44.99

Definitely the new number one seed in the field of PC tennis simulations.

Jack Nicklaus (CD)

(78) Accolade – Sport £16.99
A perfectly serviceable golf game with a good course editor tacked on. Wait for me while I put my golfing shoes on...

Newsweek 3 Globocop (CD)

(0) Mindscape – General Interest £39.99
The most expensive beer mat in the world.

Overlord

(85: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Simulation £39.99
An old idea made new with some interesting tweaks.

Pinball Dreams 2

(70) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball £19.99
Not bad at all. There's plenty for pinball wizards to get their flippers into.

Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye

(88: Recommended) Activision – Puzzle Game £29.99
Puzzles galore in this excellent addition to the rather mediocre range of games currently available for Windows.

Sherlock Holmes – The Case Of The Serrated Scalpel

(48) Electronic Arts – Adventure £49.99
Elementary, my dear Watson... and that's the problem.

Simon The Sorcerer (CD)

(89: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £44.99

A tricky adventure jaunt boosted by excellent talkie bits.

Syndicate (CD)

(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99
What a game. What a barg.

Tactical Manager

(75) Black Legend – Sport £34.99
An interesting little number with the odd weakness, but several nice ideas.

Theme Park

(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
A highly inventive 'business' sim that's fun, fun, fun. Hip hip hoorah for Bullfrog!

Walls Of Rome

(74) Digital Integration – Strategy £16.99
Good, if thin, fun.

World Cup USA '94

(78) US Gold – Sport £32.99
Good features; difference of opinion over the gameplay.

Zool 2

(82: Recommended) Millennium – Platform £34.99
As they say, if you liked *Zool*, you'll love this.

Issue 18 – September 1994

Beneath A Steel Sky (CD)

(72) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £39.99
Comic book-style adventure with excellently funny dialogue but lacking any real depth.

D-Day

(40) Impressions – Wargame £39.99
A sluggish, unrealistic and bug-ridden attempt at a wargame without many redeeming features.

FIFA International Soccer

(70) Electronic Arts – Sport £39.99
Looks and sounds great, but lacks gameplay.

Harpoon II

(70) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99
Massive, embarrassingly serious sim. Superb detail, occasionally nail-biting, always sloooooow.

Inherit The Earth – Quest For The Orb

(72) US Gold – Adventure £39.99
A well-thought out gentle little brainteaser for those who fancy a 'sensible' game.

International Sensible Soccer

(78) Renegade – Sport £19.99
One of the best on the PC, but still not up to the Amiga version.

Lilil Divil (CD)

(88: Recommended) Gremlin Graphics – Adventure £34.99

Excellent, original and addictive.

Metal And Lace: The Battle Of The Robo Babes

(35) Megatech – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
Totally devoid of any entertainment value whatsoever.

On The Ball

(68) Ascon – Sport £34.99
Too many frills, not enough body.

Outpost

(84: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Strategy £49.99
A superb game. Addictive if you've got the hardware, hell if you haven't.

Shadow Of The Comet (CD)

(88: Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure £39.99
A worthwhile reworking of a great game, but still very idiosyncratic.

Soccer Kid

(30) Krisalis – Platform Game £29.99
If you want happening platform action, then buy something else.



(Left) *Simon The Sorcerer*: at last, an adventure game with a sense of humour – albeit a bit Pratchett-esque.

Theatre Of Death

(35) *Psychosis* – Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Below average imitation of an above-average game.

TIE Fighter

(94: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Space Sim £49.99

Sheer, undiluted quality. Go out and treat yourself to a copy.

Issue 19 – October 1994

74 Wargame Construction Set 2: Tanks!

(90: Classic) SSI – Wargame £39.99
Never mind the 50-ton tanks – this is 50-tons of solid, fire-belching wargame. Absolutely brilliant.

Battle Bugs

(65) Dynamix – Strategy £TBA
A battle game with bugs in it (as opposed to a bugged battle game).

Dark Legions

(85: Recommended) SSI – Strategy £35.99
Wonderfully entertaining animations and game screens with hidden strategic depths.

Heimdall 2

(45) Core – Adventure £39.99
Great game, shame you can't play it.

Hell Cab

(50) Time Warner – Adventure £49.99
It's the same old story. Great graphics, but sadly lacking in gameplay.

IndyCar Racing Expansion Pack

(94: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Driving £17.99

These tracks are better than the original tracks (if you pretend Phoenix doesn't exist).

Ishar III: The Seven Gates Of Infinity

(50) Simarilis – Strategy £39.99
Sum up *Ishar III* in one word? Avoid. Simple as that. The worst of a bunch.

KGB

(65) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99
Bargain? Maybe. Boring? Definitely.

Kick Off 3

(55) Anco – Sport £29.99
Nice features, but gameplay isn't up to much.

Manchester United Premier League Champions

(60) Krisalis – Sport £29.99
Sensi revisited (although not as good) with a lot of features thrown in.

Planet Football

(68) Infogrames – Sport £39.99
The World Cup produced a rash of rush releases. This is not one of the best.

Police Quest IV – Open Season

(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99

Atmospheric and very entertaining. A bit of a let down at the end, though.

Summer Challenge

(73) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99
Not a bad game by sports sim standards and easy to cheat at, but do you really want another sport sim?

Under A Killing Moon (CD)

US Gold – Adventure £59.99
Pigs can fly. Interactive movies do exist. Sort of.

Wing Commander: Armada

(76) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £44.99
Lots of good ideas stuck together but somehow it doesn't hang quite right.

Issue 20 – November 1994

Alien Legacy

(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Strategy Game £39.99

Space strategy thing which is a bit like *Outpost* without the pretty bits. Daunting at first, but ultimately very rewarding.

Chaos Engine

(80: Recommended) Renegade – Arcade £32.99
A damned good, multi-direction scrolling, shooty thing with lots of big guns and silly characters.

Colonization

(90: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Try to imagine *Civilization* with more depth and better graphics. Well done... you've just imagined *Colonization*.

Cyclemania (CD)

(83: Recommended) Accolade – Arcade Game £39.99

Extremely competent *Road Rash* 3D rip-off with lovely digitised backdrops and big motorbikes.

Desert Strike

(78) Gremlin – Arcade £34.99
Conversion of the Mega Drive classic, isometric helicopter, blast 'em up game. The graphics are a bit crap but it's immensely playable.

Doom II

(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive – Arcade Game £49.99
The sequel to one of the best games ever. New graphics, a new gun and brand new monster-wonies. Miss it at your peril.

Inferno (CD)

(88: Recommended) Ocean – Space/Sim £44.99
Eagerly awaited game from DID. Lots of big space ships and silly looking aliens. One of the better space combat games.

KA-50 Hokum

(85: Recommended) Virgin – Simulation £39.99
Without a doubt the very best helicopter sim money can buy. Something for the propeller heads (yes, we know you're out there)...

NHL Hockey 95 (CD)

(91: Classic) EA – Sports/Arcade £34.99
A new version of the top-down scrolly, ice hockey game. Basically the same as the original (reviewed issue seven) but with new stats.

PGA 486 (CD)

(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sports £44.99
Gorgeous looking, solid playing, tasty little golf game. One of the best on the pc so far.

Pinball Dreams CD

(70) 21st Century – Arcade £39.99
Eight wonderfully designed, smoothly scrolling pinball tables. Why's it on CD? 'Cause there are lots of pointless rendered bits, that's why.

System Shock

(95: Classic) EA/Origin – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Pant-wettingly fantastic, cyberpunk, RPG thing. All hail *System Shock*, that shalt be king hereafter (at least until *System Shock II* comes out, that is).

Issue 21 – December 1994

Alone In The Dark 2 CD

(93: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99

A sequel that is noticeably better than the original and comes with some serious CD enhancements. What a refreshing change.

Dawn Patrol

(80: Recommended) Empire – Flight Sim £44.99
A gorgeous looking SVGA WWI flight sim with a bit of a different idea behind it... it's an interactive book, apparently.

Dreamweb

(74) Empire – Role-Playing Game £44.99

Cyberpunk RPG with lots of violence and a shagging scene that has now become infamous.

Ecstatica

(93: Classic) Psychosis – Adventure £44.99

An utterly brilliant *Alone in the Dark*-like with ellipsoid-generated characters and lots of pert buttocks.

FIFA CD

(76) Electronic Arts – Sports £39.99

A smart-looking footy game that just falls short of being an absolute belter.

Little Big Adventure

(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Adventure Game £44.99

A truly amazing adventure with pretty graphics and weird French gameplay. Gobsacking.

Magic Carpet

(96: Classic) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99

Bloody excellent shoot 'em up – looks brilliant, totally addictive. A must-have.

Project X

(76) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £19.99

A very competent and nicely low-priced little shoot 'em up.

Rise Of The Robots

(88: Recommended) Mirage – Beat 'Em Up £44.99

Possibly the best beat 'em up on the pc so far with some excellent rendered sprites.

Space Simulator

(75) Microsoft – Simulator £39.99

A huge simulation of man's quest for space that is just a little too ambitious for its own good.

Star Crusader

(60) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

Basically this is a poor man's *Wing Commander* with some nice CD bits.

Transport Tycoon

(94: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

One of the best strategy games around and a more than worthy sequel to *Railroad Tycoon*.

Total Carnage

(74) ICE – Shoot 'Em Up £27.99

Good challenging fun and a more than competent conversion of the original arcade machine.

Issue 22 – January 1995

Aces Of The Deep

(90: Classic) Dynamix/Sierra – Naval Sim £39.99

Graphics, gameplay, sound and atmo combine to make this the best sub game available.

All New World Of Lemmings

(78) Digital Integration – Puzzle Game £39.99

If you like all the other *Lemmings* games, you'll like this one, too.

Armored Fist (CD)

(86: Recommended) US Gold/Novalogic – Simulation £44.99

Comanche on wheels. Er, tracks. You know what we mean.

Creature Shock

(78) Virgin – Adventure Game £49.99

An engrossing, atmospheric 3D adventure game. Great graphics, absorbing levels, but lousy soundtrack.

Cyberwar

(55) SCI – Arcade Adventure £49.99

It looks amazing. The gameplay isn't.

Dark Sun II

(80: Recommended) Mindscape – RPG £44.99

Love it for its brains, not for its looks.

Discworld

(96: Classic) Psychosis – Adventure Game £49.99

Discworld is possibly the best point-and-click adventure game ever made.

Front Page Sports Baseball

(85: Recommended) Sierra – Sport £44.99

It takes all the best bits from all the best games and ends up being the best.

Klik 'n' Play

(88: Recommended) Europress – Game Designer for Windows £39.99

Neat intuitive, and loads of fun.

Novastorm

(40) Psychosis – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99

Repeat ad nauseam: 'Pretty graphics doth not a game make.'

Power Drive

(50) US Gold – Racing Game £39.99

Knock off 30 whole points for no two-player mode. Sod off *Power Drive*.

Quarantine

(80: Recommended) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

An excellent blast and it looks good, too.

Retribution

(45) Gremlin Interactive – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

Not only is it a below average shoot 'em up, it has pretensions too.

US Navy Fighters

(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £44.99

If it had a multi-player facility, we would've given it 100. But it hasn't, so we won't.

Warcraft

(75) Interplay – Strategy £39.99

Good, simple, addictive strategy game.

Issue 23 – February 1995

Alone In The Dark 3

(95: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99

The mega-stonkingly weird and wonderful final chapter in the *Alone In The Dark* trilogy.

Cannon Fodder 2

(74) Virgin Interactive – Arcade/Strategy £34.99

Just more of the same, or is *Cannon Fodder 2* a significant improvement? Sensible returns with more 'fun with a gun'.

Commander Blood

(81: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure Game £44.99

It's French, and guess what? It's weird. Very weird. We try not to get at them for it... but this is just plain mad.

Cyberia

(80: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure/Shoot 'Em Up £49.99

A contender for the 'Best-looking game of 1994' award. Tastier than treacle pudding with lashings of thick custard, and almost certainly better than *Rebel Assault*.

Dragon Lore

(81: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £44.99

Cryo's epic multi-CD graphic adventure finally arrives. Is it just more French weirdness or is it actually a decent game?

Hammer Of The Gods

(77) US Gold – Strategy £TBA

Nordic domination and general Euro-bashing in this simple but addictive strategy war sim from New World Computing.

Kyrandia 3

(87: Recommended) Virgin – Adventure £44.99

Westwood's *Fables and Fiends* series makes it to number three, and this time you get to play the bad guy!

Lion King

(71) Virgin – Platform Game £29.99

The smash-hit movie turns into a reasonable-ish platform game. *PC Zone* good tip number one (in a series of...) – just pretend your PC is a Mega Drive.

NASCAR Racing

(84: Recommended) Virgin – Racing Sim £44.99

Papyrus follows up *IndyCar* with the popular American sport of driving round and round in circles.

Noctropolis

(79) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99

For a change EA goes all weird, gothic and horrific in this unusual super-hero adventure.

Ultimate Body Blows

(78) Team 17 – Beat 'Em Up £29.99

An Amiga conversion from Team 17. But don't be put off by that – it's actually quite good.

Voyeur

(40) Interplay – Adventure £39.99

Not as pervy as you might think. Yes, there are suspenders and brassieres in it, but don't buy it hoping for nudity or naughtiness 'cos you won't find any (er well, not much, at least not enough to satisfy the male staff on *PC Zone*).

Wing Commander III

(62) Electronic Arts – Flight Simulation £59.99

Four million dollars, Luke Skywalker and a well-known porn actress – a potentially interesting situation, if ever there was one.

Issue 24 – March 1995

Aladdin

(70) Virgin – Arcade £29.99

He leaps tall buildings, cuts through baddies with his scimitar and wears pointy slippers.

He's Aladdin – who else?

Dark Forces

(95: Classic) LucasArts/Virgin – Action Adventure £54.99

The empire is finally *Doom*-ed, but is it better than the real thing? We bring you the first review of the game everyone's itching to get their hands on, in a special world exclusive, courtesy of LucasArts and Virgin.

Doom Clones: Head To Head

(55) Merit – Action Adventure £39.99

We put Merit's *Dr Radiaci* up against Elite's *Virtuoso* and run for cover (well, *Doom*, actually).

Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller

(25) Gametek – Adventure £39.99

It is: it isn't. If it's really this bad then start praying for forgiveness immediately.

Kick Off 3: European Challenge

(70) Anco – Sport £29.99

The last *Kick Off* was an absolute nightmare. Has Anco finally got it together in Europe?

King's Quest VII

(93: Classic) Sierra – Adventure £44.99

The latest point-and-click extravaganza from the Roberta Williams' school of mush-wushy, cutesy-wutesyness.

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(Right) *IndyCar Racing*: great graphics and playability make this the best ever driving game.

(Far right) *Sam & Max*: The clue's inside the cat. Rip its head off! (Sick, or what?)



Knights Of Xentar

(10) Megatech – Adventure £49.99
A plentiful lack of beat 'em up action strides onto the PC, courtesy of Megatech. Ouch!

Menzoberanzan

(68) Mindscape – Role-Playing Game £TBA
Not a tasty lozenge that promises to clear your stuffy nose and soothe your sore throat, but a rather ordinary role-playing game.

Metaltech: Earthsiege

(87: Recommended) Sierra – Simulation £39.99
Go stomping mad in this spectacular HERC-fest. Just one thing though, why have extravagant HERCs that walk when the terrain is flat?

Realms Of Arkania: Star Trail

(85: Recommended) US Gold – RPG £44.99
The sequel to the keenly received *Blade Of Destiny* finally makes it onto CD-ROM. Hip, hip...

SuperKarts

(82: Recommended) Virgin – Action £TBA
The most fun you can have with your bum an inch off the ground, when wearing a crash helmet and clad in brightly-coloured leather.

TIE Fighter: Defender Of The Empire

(73) LucasArts – Space/Action £19.99
Two new missions and a new ship. What ever will they think of next?

Wings Of Glory

(78) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £TBA
Chocks away as Origin reach for the skies to do battle with the Hun, dastardly chaps with 'taches and every other WWI flight sim ever created.

Issue 25 – April 1995

BC Racers

(62) Core Design – Racing Sim £34.99
Best described as a kind of *Chuck Rock* meets *Super Mario Kart*. Unfortunately, the clash of these two mega-games hasn't proven to be that good. Oops.

Big Red Adventure

(70) Core Design – Adventure £39.99
This is the follow up to *Nippon Safes...* arrgh, keep it away! Hang on a minute, though, *Big Red Adventure* looks like it could be quite good.

Bioforge

(95: Classic) Electronic Arts – Action Adventure £44.99
Is this the first 'real' interactive movie? Or is it just another game that looks like *Alone In The Dark*?

Descent

(94: Classic) Interplay – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
Could this be the game to finally knock *Doom* off the top spot? The fabulous 3D game from Interplay arrives at last.

Heretic

(78) id/Raven – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
'Doom-in-tights'. Can a fighting fantasy version of the greatest game of all time, ever, ever, really be better? Er, no.

Iron Assault

(57) Virgin – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £34.99
A distinctly average 'big robot' game joins the ranks of other distinctly average 'big robot' games on the PC.

Legions

(65) Mindscape – Strategy Wargame £34.99
This is definitely one for the Hex-heads, this is. It's intense, ludicrously strategic and it runs under Windows. Eek!

Lost Eden

(76) Virgin – Adventure £34.99
Cryo's dinosaur game finally arrives a year after it was unveiled. It's a bit like *Jurassic Park* meets *Dragon Lore*.

Issue 26 – May 1995

Atari Action Pack

(50) Activision – VCS Atari Compilation £24.99
This compilation includes lots of really ancient Activision Atari VCS games, all for Windows and all on one cd. So what's it like? Well, it's like a time machine that takes you somewhere a bit crap!

Cyclones

(78) Mindscape – Adventure £44.99
Yet another *Doom* clone – but not a bad one by any means – from the team that brought us both *Heretic* and *Shadowcaster*.

Football Glory

(60) Kompart – Sports £TBA
Q: When is *Sensible Soccer* not really *Sensible Soccer*?
A: When it's a not-quite-so-good copy called *Football Glory*.

Guilty

(58) Psygnosis – Adventure £39.99
Sequel-ola. *Guilty* is the follow up to the awful *Innocent Until Caught*, and it's significantly better, but still not brilliant.

Jungle Strike

(79) Gremlin – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Another sequel... this time, the sequel to *Desert Strike*. But this shoot 'em up is bigger, more varied and harder than the original. Not bad at all.

NBA Live

(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
EA Sports awakens from a period of dormancy with this absolutely corking basketball arcade game – the best of its type around.

Renegade

(75) SSI – Space Sim £44.99
SSI's *TIE Fighter/Wing Commander* wannabe in glorious VGA. A surprisingly playable space warfare game.

Rise Of The Triad

(82: Classic) US Gold and PD Selections – Adventure £39.95
Some love it and some hate it... but of the *Doom*-alikes, this is one of the best.

Super Frog

(40) Team 17 – Platform £19.99
A platform game with a frog in it... Uh-huh. Okay.

Tank Commander

(60) Domark – Simulation £39.99
A budget-style tank game at full price. If you've got more money than sense, you'll really love it!

Woodruff and the Schnibble of Azimuth

(75) Sierra – Adventure £39.99
A weird adventure game from Sierra. A wonderfully deceptive adventure with comic-book feel!

X-COM

(94: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
The first X-COM was absolutely brilliant. This sequel is even better still.

Issue 27 – June 1995

Blind Date

(25) Domark – Adventure £39.99
Chris had a jolly splendid time reviewing last month's 'interactive-try-to-get-laid-simulator'. What will the softies come up with next?

Full Throttle

(92: Classic) LucasArts/Virgin – Adventure £49.99
Hooray for LucasArts adventures. Big, tough guy biker stuff this time. Splendid.

Flight Of The Amazon Queen

(50) Warner Interactive – Adventure £39.99
This tries desperately to be a LucasArts adventure but fails quite miserably. Sorry, it's naff.

Hardball 4

(83: Recommended) Accolade/Warner – Arcade/Sports £39.99

Returning May's theme of 'sequels', Warner Interactive brings us the fourth *Hardball*. Surely Warner have to call it quits now?

High Seas Trader

(62) Impressions – Strategy/Simulation Game £39.99
Affectionately referred to as 'High Street Trader' in the PC Zone office, this is the latest strategy offering from Impressions.

Magic Carpet: Hidden Worlds

(80: Recommended) Bullfrog – Arcade/Strategy £19.99

A sort of add-on thingy for *Magic Carpet* with lots of snow. The trouble is though, it's completely and utterly, stupidly, bloody hard.

PyroTechnica

(69) Psygnosis – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
A very poor *Descent*-wannabe from Psygnosis. Fortunately though, it's considerably cheaper.

Psycho Pinball

(78) Codemasters – Arcade £44.99
Pinball from Codemasters. Some nice tables. Some nice music. Sorted.

Slipstream 5000

(88: Recommended) Gremlin Interactive – Arcade/Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Slipstream is a three-dimensional-fabby-whizzoo racing/shooting/speedy thing from Gremlin. Splendid stuff, and better than boring, run-of-the-mill racing games.

Star Trek: TNG – "A Final Unity"

(94: Classic) MicroProse – Adventure £49.99
Yes, it may have a ridiculously long title, but this is, without a doubt, the best game to bear the *Star Trek* name so far.

Super Streetfighter II Turbo

(90: Classic) Gametek – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
SSFII Turbo is one of the best arcade conversions ever seen on the PC.

Ticonderoga

(78) Mindscape – Naval/Strategy £44.99
Silly name but a damn fine naval strategy game. Lovely graphics and splendid CD bits.

Virtua Chess

(85: Recommended) Titus – Strategy £44.99
Snazzy 3D VGA chess thingy from Titus, France. This one's different looking and with a ninja bastard brainbox.

Warriors

(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
What, yet another beat 'em up? Anyone would think there's a shortage of 'em or something.

Issue 28 – July 1995

1830

(68) US Gold – Board Game £39.99
Set in the early years of American colonisation, a sort of *Railroad Tycoon* meets *Risk*. Strictly for those of transpotter persuasion.

Alex Dampier Pro Hockey

(66) Merit Software – Sports Sim £39.95
Ice hockey sim with *FIFA*-style viewpoint, but impossible control system, and comes no where near *NHL Hockey '95*.

Alien Breed: Tower Assault

(81) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
The sequel to *Alien Breed*, but superior to the PC version of the original. Great graphics and frenzied, addictive shooty action.

Brett Hull Hockey '95

(73) Accolade/Warner – Sports Simulation £39.99
Top-down ice hockey game, which doesn't match the king of ice hockey sims, *NHL Hockey '95*, but betters *Alex Dampier Pro Hockey '95*.

Chaos Control

(40) Philips/Infogrames – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Unbelievably terrible futuristic FMV shoot 'em up that was passable on CD-i, but should never have seen the light of day on PC.

Command & Conquer

(95: Classic) Virgin – Strategy Adventure Game £44.99
Dune 2 meets *Cannon Fodder* in this brilliant game of soldiers. It's without doubt one of the best of its genre around right now.

Daedalus Encounter

(58) Virgin – Adventure £44.95
Interactive movie game that fails to make the grade – and, for what it's worth, stars Tia Carrere, the babe from *Wayne's World*.

Dominus

(42) US Gold – Strategy Game £39.99
Fantasy battle game with good graphics and comprehensive interface but lacking that vital ingredient – gameplay.

Frontier: First Encounters

(78) Gametek – Space Strategy Simulation £39.99
Disappointing enhanced version of *Elite II*, which is also bugged to jiggery.

Jagged Alliance

(72) Mindscape – Strategy Game £39.99
Risk meets *Syndicate* in this strategy battle jaunt. It's not groundbreaking or particularly original but quite good fun all the same.

Loadstar

(35) BMG Interactive – Shoot 'Em Up £34.99
Dreadful FMV shoot 'em up not worth the paper its manual was printed on.

Machiavelli The Prince

(89) MicroProse – Strategy Game £44.99
Colonization-style sim packed with political intrigue, assassinations, plagues, pirates and a unique play by e-mail feature.

Man Utd: The Double

(71) Krisalis – Sports Sim £29.99
The best *Manchester United* game yet, but it's still not a patch on the excellent *Sensible Soccer* of this world.

Sim Tower

(70) Maxis – Strategy Game £39.99
Basically *Sim City* viewed from the side with the emphasis on tower blocks, but not as addictive – and the presentation is dire.

Virtual Pool

(91: Classic) Interplay – Sports Sim £44.99
Superb gameplay and 3D graphics, complete with a multi-player network option. This is about as close to a real game of pool as you can possibly get.

Issue 29 – August 1995

Civil War

(83: Recommended) Empire – Strategy Game £44.99
The sequel to *Fields Of Glory*, and jolly nice it looks too.

FX Fighters

(93: Classic) Philips/GTE – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
The closest thing to *Virtua Fighter* on the PC, and by far the best beat 'em up you can buy. We love it!

Hi-Octane

(83: Recommended) Bullfrog/Electronic Arts – Racing Game £39.99

Bullfrog surprises everyone by releasing a racing game, and surprises everyone even more by not saying anything about it until it's nearly finished. Hmm.

Micro Machines 2

(92: Classic) Codemasters – Racing Game £44.99
A brilliant, simple and effective racing game with a rather nifty little track designer thrown in for good measure.

Orion Conspiracy

(36) Domark – Adventure Game £39.99
Domark unveils what has to be the worst-scripted computer game ever conceived.

Perfect General 2

(82: Recommended) Mirage Software – Strategy Wargame £44.99
Hex-tastic strategy game for those of you who really like your wargames intense.

Picture Perfect Golf

(30) Empire – Sports Sim £44.99
Pretty bloody naff. But hey, if you want to look at nice, digitised pictures of a golf course, this is well worth the dosh.

Prisoner Of Ice

(88: Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
The second in the *Cthulhu* range – and it's a stonker of a point-and-click adventure.

Scottish Open Golf

(60) Core Design – Sports Sim £39.99
Core Design finally releases its 3D virtual golf thing. There are some okay bits and some pretty nob bits. Unfortunately, it's the nob bits that win through.

Silverload

(7) Millennium/Psygnosis – Adventure Game £39.99
Millennium and Psygnosis team up to produce an adventure which is truly... quite awful.

Striker 95

(62) Time Warner – Sports Sim £34.99
A football game that looks really fab and groovy, but doesn't quite cut it in the gameplay stakes.

Ultimate Doom

(90: Classic) GT Interactive – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
The original *Doom* re-packaged with an extra episode. Is it another classic or just a colossal rip-off?

Vortex

(80: Recommended) Warner Interactive – Interactive Movie £39.99

It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game. It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game. Arrghhhh!

Issue 30 – September 1995

Across the Rhine

(86: Recommended) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
If you're a propeller head you'll think it's the dog's gonads. If you're a bit of a thicky, you'll still like it, once you work your way through the laborious manual, that is.



(Left) Theme Park:
Sim City eat your
heart out.

Action Soccer

(50) UbiSoft – Football Sim £34.99

It had potential, but ultimately *Action Soccer* seems to have been relegated to the ranks of 'another crap footie game'.

Air Power

(84: Recommended) Mindscape – Flight Sim £44.99
Rowan teams up with Mindscape and chucks in all the best bits from its other flight sims, to make up a sort of fantasy strategy game, which is really pretty groovy.

AIV Networks

(80: Recommended) Infogrames – Business Sim £44.99
A business sim for people who love trains. (Yee gods! What next?)

Dungeon Master 2

(59) Interplay – Role Playing Game £44.99
It came out late and it wasn't worth the wait. Disappointingly out-dated and old-fashioned.

Last Dynasty

(45) Sierra – Space Combat Sim £44.99
A good Windows-based adventure game, which is completely ruined by crap combat sections.

Lords Of Midnight

(60) Domark – Adventure £44.99
Another very old game that's been given the sequel treatment – our reviewer said it was the biggest let-down since that leak in his inflatable Claire Rayner.

Sim Town

(81: Recommended) Maxis – Simulation £29.99
Fun and educational in equal measures. But even better, you can make people say rude things when they're pissed off.

Simon The Sorcerer 2

(84: Recommended) Adventure Soft (UK) – Adventure £44.99

Simon returns with DMs and long hair. Even though Chris Barrie hasn't done the voice this time, it's still a bloody good talkie adventure.

Space Quest 6

(70) Sierra – Adventure Game £44.99
Trite adventure completely devoid of humour. *Space Quest* fans will love it!

Terminal Velocity

(80: Recommended) US Gold – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
A very good 3D engine, wearing a pair of rather unoriginal and unaddictive 'game-play trousers'.

US Marine Fighters

(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £19.99
Absolutely brilliant. The only thing that prevented us giving *US Marine Fighters* 100 per cent was the lack of a network facility.

Issue 31 – October 1995

EF2000

(97: Classic) Ocean/DID – Flight Sim £49.99
Something for everyone. The best balance between simulator and game, ever.

Fade To Black

(94: Classic) Electronic Arts – Arcade Adventure £44.99
A corking follow up to *Flashback*, with lots of spinnies-aroundy polygon bits, morphing monsties and big guns.

The Need For Speed

(89: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Racing £44.99
There's no need to buy a 3D now this has made it to the PC! This sits somewhere between *Screamer* and the forthcoming *FIGP2*. We love the splendid crashes!

Apache Longbow

(96: Classic) Digital Integration – Sim £39.99
The best helicopter sim around; although *Comanche* looks better, nothing comes close to matching the mixture of spot on handling, tactics, networking and atmosphere.

Buried In Time

(77) US Gold – Interactive Movie £44.99
The sequel to *The Journeyman Project* is a tad too lengthy; technically it's great but it's lacking the elements of truly enjoyable gameplay.

MechWarrior 2

(88: Recommended) Activision – Board Game £49.99
Mayhem! Go on a stomping frenzy encased in a massive armour-plated robot body. Good, hard-hitting fun with plenty of missions and a good difficulty curve.

Blown Away

(19) Instant Access – Interactive Movie £39.99
A pretty crap game of a pretty crap film.

Cyberbykes

(10) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £24.99
It came, it saw, it sucked. Ideal as a present for someone you don't like.

Lemmings 3D

(71) Psygnosis – Puzzle Game £39.99
We've seen it all before; all that's new is that it's now from a different angle. Yawn.

Player Manager 2

(45) Anco – Sport £34.99
Visually stunted, it's difficult to control the ball. What else? Oh, it's one to avoid.

Championship Manager 2

(92: Classic) Domark – Sport £44.99 (TBC)
Every other football management game is just that – a game – but this one actually becomes 'real life'.

Issue 32 – November 1995

AI Unser Jr Racing

(60) Mindscape – Racing Game £29.99
It has all the features you'd expect from a racing game but ultimately it's fun for only a limited time.

Ascendancy

(93: Classic) Virgin – Strategy £39.99
More than just another space-based strategy game, this has got all the best bits of every god/strategy/warfare game available. A word of warning though, get stuck into this and you can say goodbye to your social life.

Battle Beast

(68) 7th Level – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
A cartoon beat 'em up with excellent animation, cut scenes and special effects – but that's it. Shame, 'cos it looks great, but as for gameplay – forget it.

Burn/Cycle

(85: Recommended) Phillips – Interactive Adventure £44.99

One of the best interactive adventures we've seen; good pacing, sharp plot and plenty of variety combine to make it outstanding.

Crime Patrol & Gamegun

(70) American Laser Games/Mirage – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

It won't take you long to exhaust the fun factor of *Crime Patrol*, but the gun is compatible with some other games and as a bundled package it's really not bad value.

Darker

(62) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Mediocre 3D blast 'em up with nice smooth polygons and lots to shoot at, but apart from that not much more.

Fatal Racing

(88: Recommended) Gremlin Interactive – Racing £TBC

Ridge Racer meets *Stunt Car Racer*... as long as you've got a Pentium, of course.

Magic Carpet 2

(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
It sent our reviewer into a frenzy! The classic game is now even better, with new monsters and a new graphical style which includes scary night-time bits – totally addictive.

NHL Hockey 96

(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
This uses Electronic Art's new 'Virtual Stadium' technology (used to great effect in *FIFA Soccer* to make it look so flash). Definitely one of the nicest-looking sports games we've reviewed for ages.

PGA Tour 96

(94: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
New and improved! Now includes two new Championship courses, you can play as or against 14 actual photo-realistic pros, there's a new picture-in-picture view... need we go on? The best golf game just got better.

Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure

(70) Activision – Platform £44.99
Conversion of the ancient Atari vcs platform game; nothing particularly special but still fairly addictive.

Primal Rage

(82: Recommended) Time Warner Interactive – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
Jurassic Park for psychopaths – yep, dinosaurs a-plenty, good gameplay and graphics. Should appeal to *Mortal Kombat* or *Street Fighter* fans.

Issue 33 – December 1995

Alien Odyssey

(77) Philips – Space Adventure Game £44.99
A sort of cross between *Bioforge* and *Cyberia*, with the odd *Star Wars* reference thrown in; overall a pretty adventure which plods a bit.

Battle Isle 3: Shadow Of The Emperor

(93: Classic) Blue Byte – Strategy £45.99
The third and possibly final instalment of one of the most highly respected strategy games of all time. Certainly worth checking out if you like your strategy futuristic.

Comanche Vs Werewolf

(88: Recommended) Novologic/US Gold – Helicopter Flight Sim £39.99

The sequel takes the original game and chucks in a completely new one as well for good measure. Maybe not the best helicopter flight sim around, but it still has plenty to recommend it.

Crusader

(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Blast 'Em Up £49.99
Action, adventure, people getting their heads blown off – bloody excellent.

Destruction Derby

(90: Classic) Sony Interactive – Racing Game £44.99
The PlayStation game where you can smash yourself and others to pieces comes to the PC... Plenty of network options, five different ways to play, superb graphics – need we say more?

FIFA '96

(84: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
If you already own last year's *FIFA* and you quite like it, it's worth buying this one. But if you want a simple and easy to control system look elsewhere.

Mortal Kombat 3

(90: Classic) GT Interactive – Beat 'Em Up £44.99
This is the best two-dimensional beat 'em up you'll find anywhere right now. Make damn sure you enjoy it while it lasts.

Navy Strike

(90: Classic) Empire Interactive – Naval Simulation £44.99

Actually two games in one: a flight sim and a military command sim. In it you pilot a jet fighter in the future – you'll find that once the atmosphere kicks in you're hooked.

Phantasmagoria

(50) Sierra – Adventure £49.99
Without doubt a brave effort (spanning seven cDs!) but sadly the interactive part is a bit ambitious. It looks good but that's about it.

Road Warrior

(61) Gametek – Driving Game £39.99
The sequel to *Quarantine* is unfortunately nothing to write home about, despite the good graphics.

Screamer

(86: Recommended) VIE – Driving Game £29.99
Stunning looking super speedy arcade racer with six different tracks, six different cars (manual or auto) and three different skill levels. Very arcadey indeed.

Worms

(84: Recommended) Ocean – Strategy £34.99
Worms is what you get if you cross *Lemmings* with *Cannon Fodder*. Four people can play at once, there's lots of weapons and features, and the levels are generated afresh each time you play – good fun.

Witchaven

(88: Recommended) US Gold – Arcade/Role-Playing Game £29.99
Witchaven is packed with lots of spells and potions to play with, the usual network/modem options, triggers and traps, impressive graphical effects – and if you're looking for gore you've found it. Sick, twisted and violent – we like it.

Issue 34 – January 1996

Action Soccer

(92: Classic) Gremlin Interactive – Sport £TBC
Ranking alongside *Command & Conquer* as the office favourite at the moment, this is currently the best footie game on the PC thanks to excellent gameplay and a fantastic 3D polygonised pitch arrangement – sorry *FIFA* and *Sensi*, but you'll have to step aside.

Entomorph

(78) Mindscape – Role-Playing Game £44.99

If you've already got a copy of *Ultima VII* and fancy something similar in style, *Entomorph* is worth a look. It's got a fairly engrossing storyline, although the presentation is somewhat lacklustre.

Fighter Duel

(65) Philips Media – Flight Sim £39.99
There's very little to say about this game as there's actually very little to it – don't expect it to keep you riveted to the screen; even what little scenery there is is dull.

F1 Grand Prix Manager

(85: Recommended) MicroProse – Racing Game £44.99
One of the most imaginative management simulations around – certainly the best Grand Prix one available, but then it's the only one.

Frankenstein: Through The Eyes Of The Monster

(79) Interplay – Adventure £44.99
Starring Tim Curry, this is an excellent gothic adventure. The puzzles are challenging, the storyline is cleverly structured, the visuals are sumptuous, but sadly it's hampered by a dodgy interface which makes it difficult to navigate your way through the locations.

IndyCar 2

(90: Classic) Papyrus/Virgin – Racing £34.99
Polygontastic with absolutely glorious SVGA graphics. If you already own *IndyCar 1*, hold out for *FIGP2* instead. But if you don't, buy this one. Oh, but if we're really honest here, you ought to try to afford *FIGP2* as well.

Mortal Coil

(50) Vic Tokai/Virgin – Strategic Shoot 'Em Up £34.99
Is this yet another *Doom* clone? It basically involves loads of shooting everything you see from a 3D perspective. A great idea on paper, but it's let down by poor graphics and voiceovers (even with the dubious talents of Dani Behr) – you may well prefer *Hexen*.

Pinball World

(77) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Game £44.99

For some reason there seems to be more pinball and footie games coming out than you could possibly want, and although you've got a choice of table layouts (which you don't really need anyway) it doesn't really offer anything markedly different.

Pro Pinball: The Web

(90: Classic) Empire Interactive – Pinball Game £34.99

Don't discount this game simply because it only features one table – it's positively packed with features, you can see the table in its entirety or from six different viewpoints, it's realistic (you can nudge the table from either side as well as the bottom), and it's got a totally stonking soundtrack.

Rebel Assault II

(90: Classic) LucasArts/VIE – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99

If you can't see what all the fuss about *Star Wars* is about or you didn't like the original *Rebel Assault*, chances are you won't like this one. On the other hand, if you're a die-hard Empire/Rebel fan and spend your nights re-enacting scenes between Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader, you'll love it. Of course solid action, 'real' live action bits, bloody gorgeous graphics and a corking storyline go some way to recommend it as well.

Sensible World Of Soccer

(60) Warner Interactive – Sport £39.99

We waited a long time for this one. It's got some management bits, some nice rendered cut-scenes and commentary, but it's still not a patch on *Actua Soccer*.

Stonekeep

(76) Interplay – Role-Playing Game £44.99

It looks a bit dated (mainly because it's flick-screen), but in its favour it has a nice, easy to handle control method, a wide variety of levels to keep you interested and a very thoughtful experience system which allows your character(s) to become more skilled with their weapons the more they use them.

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
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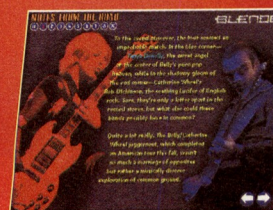




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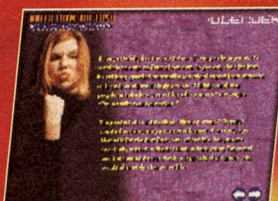
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(Right) *Alone in the Dark 3*: More Carnaby, cobwebs, murder, mystery and mayhem.

(Far right) *Command & Conquer: A Case of Cannon Fodder* meets *Dune 2*.



Su27 Flanker

(95: Classic) Mindscape – Flight Sim £44.99
Developed by Russian pilots, this is all about one of the scariest aircraft ever built. It's no lightweight 'hop in and pole around the sky' type product, but unfortunately it's let down by a lack of network or serial link multi-play facility. If you want a comparison it's better than EF2000, MIG29 and Tornado.

The Dig

(87: Recommended) LucasArts/VIE – Adventure £44.99
Another offering touched by the hand of Spielberg. It's a proper adventure with a proper story, a cut above your usual sci-fi adventure stuff. And it's got great music.

TiR

(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive – Pinball £TBC
You get six tables to choose from (including Monster, Funfair, Gangster, Sci-Fi, Myst and Majik). It doesn't have the depth of the single table in *The Web*, but it's good all the same.

Williams Arcade Classics

(90: Classic) GT Interactive – Various £29.99
Worth buying for an arcade-perfect version of *Defender* alone, this '80s compilation also includes *Robotron 2084*, *StarGate Defender 2*, *Joust*, *Bubbles* and *Sinistar*. The graphics obviously aren't too hot given the age of the titles, but don't hold that against it.

WipeOut

(78) Sony Interactive – Racing £44.99
Winging its way directly from the PlayStation, this game of anti-gravity racing with floating cars seems to have lost something in the conversion; play it on anything other than a Pentium and you can kiss the PC version's smoothness and graphical details goodbye. Top marks for the brilliant soundtrack though.

Issue 35 – February 1996

Battleground Ardenne

(84: Recommended) Empire Interactive – Wargame £40 (TBC)

One for the serious strategy heads among you – hex-wargaming finally gets updated for the '90s. (NB: You'll need Windows 95 to play it.)

Beavis and Butt-head

(87: Recommended) Viacom New Media – Point-and-click Adventure £39.99

Fans of the gruesome twosome will love this game (but avoid it if you're not as it's unlikely to appeal). Plenty of puzzle solving and a hilarious script – it's like being in control of your very own *Beavis and Butt-head* episode.

Extreme Pinball

(65) Electronic Arts – Pinball Game £39.99

So what did our reviewer make of the 'proper' version of *Epic Pinball*? He had one word for it: "Aaaaarrrggghh!" If you're after a top quality pinball game, buy *Pro Pinball: The Web* instead.

Quest For Fame

(80: Recommended) IBM – Music RPG £49.95

Air guitar rules! Pick up the plastic plectrum and join Aerosmith for a riff extravaganza as you try to make it from unknown musician to mega rock 'n' roll star – if you succeed you get to play with the band themselves!

Terminator: Future Shock

(85: Recommended) VIE – Strategic Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
The third title in the *Terminator* series, this has plenty of action and atmosphere, as well as one of the best 3D engines around.

The 11th Hour

(67) Trilobyte/VIE – Adventure/Puzzle Game £TBC

The sequel to *The 7th Guest* has been a long time coming – unfortunately it wasn't really worth the wait. It's not much different either, apart from the addition of a 'treasure hunt' challenge. But then if you really, really like puzzles you may find it pretty playable.

The Hive

(78) Funsoft UK – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

A pre-rendered blastathon which is a bit like *Rebel Assault*, only without the good bits.

This Means War!

(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Strategy Wargame £44.99

Strategy, action and lots of futuristic stuff, a sort of *Command & Conquer* meets *Transport Tycoon*. It's slower than C&C, but addictive once you've got to grips with all the options.

Virtua Fighter Remix

(89: Recommended) Sega/Datrotech – Beat 'Em Up £varies, bundled with Diamond Edge graphics card
Bloody stunning visuals with excellent detail on the players – but in the gameplay stakes it doesn't quite match up to *Mortal Kombat 3* or *StreetFighter II Turbo*.

Virtual Karts

(71) MicroProse – Arcade Racing Game £TBC
MicroProse have cleverly applied the word 'virtual' to the title – but don't ask why, 'cos the karts don't handle like karts and the hires graphics are jerk-tastic.

William Shatner's TekWar

(58) Capstone/US Gold – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

A *Doom* clone we reckon you could probably quite happily live without... (Sorry Will!)

Wing Commander IV

(85: Recommended) Origin/Electronic Arts – Space Combat Sim £TBC

The filmed sequences apparently cost over eight million dollars – and it shows, they really are impressive. Unfortunately though, despite a genuinely interesting plot, a strong storyline and the fact that WCIV is the most cinematic gaming experience you'll find, the game's seriously lacking. You'll also need a mighty meaty PC to play it on.

Issue 36 – March 1996

Absolute Zero

(70) Domark – Space Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

Don't even consider attempting *Absolute Zero* unless your PC's got a serious amount of spare hard disk space – our reviewer found that it needed 20MB just to have the menu running at optimum performance! It's a bit of a shame really, as it could have been an entertaining variation on the *Wing Commander/Elite* series: it's got loads of ground-based missions, various different characters, fairly complex mission objectives, VGA spaceships, alien monsties, a big plot twist... but it's also got bland scenery and a disappointing frame rate. To sum up, it's *Wing Commander* on the rocks.

Civilization 2

(90: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

This is basically an enhanced version of the first game, but this time round the combat's been tightened up and plenty of new units and advances have been added, as well as 'hit points' – even die-hard fans of the original will find that there's a lot to learn. Of course the biggest difference is that *Civ 2* is completely 3D – although moving up a perspective can make things a bit cluttered and hard to follow at times, especially if you use the option to have multiple windows open at once. (NB: Windows 95 or 3.1 with WinG required.)

Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2

(60) Core Design – Helicopter Sim £TBC

The Sega CD helicopter blaster gets updated for the PC – although we're not really sure why they bothered. Although its got arcade-style controls it's even less realistic than most games of its type, and it's totally spoilt by a haphazard viewpoint – one minute the sky's empty, the next you've got something right in front of you. Even worse, targets that you lock onto can vanish from sight as you fire. This means you end up shooting from a stationary position, making you more vulnerable to attack and, basically, ruining the game.

Formula One Grand Prix 2

(95: Classic) MicroProse – Racing £44.99

Our reviewer called this an absolute masterpiece – even the menu screens, sub menus, pre-race options and set-up screens can keep you happily occupied for ages. If you want to have all the options and textures in their full glory you'll need a Pentium, but even in low-res it still looks bloody great. The attention to detail is simply amazing thanks to Geoff Hammond's perfectionism, and the physics of the game engine are just outstanding – give up your social life now!

Police Quest: SWAT

(83: Recommended) Sierra – Adventure £49.99

Daryl Gates makes a welcome return with what has to be the best game in the *Police Quest* series. It's a different and enjoyable twist

on the traditional adventure game – the only thing holding it back from a classic rating is a lack of compatibility with a light gun.

Rayman

(76) UbiSoft – Platform Game £TBC

Direct from the Sony PlayStation come cutesy Disney-esque sprites, silky smooth parallax scrolling and colourful backgrounds spread over a massive 68 levels; however, there aren't any especially clever puzzles or particularly taxing levels, just nice graphics and a steady learning curve that veers from easy-peasy to bloody annoying. Sorry *Rayman*, but despite the high standard of presentation, you're ultimately a bit limited and pretty linear.

The Beast Within: Gabriel Knight 2

(88: Recommended) Sierra – Adventure £44.99

Admittedly *The Beast Within* isn't perhaps the most difficult game you'll ever play, but as an interactive movie it's brilliant. The acting is great, the FMV scenes contribute beautifully to the atmosphere and the plot gets increasingly complex and engrossing. Excellent!

Time Gate

(84: Recommended) Infogrames – Arcade Adventure £44.99

From the team that brought us *Alone In The Dark* comes something that looks like erm... *Alone In The Dark*, but set way, way back in the days of the Knights Templar. However, there are some annoying inconsistencies: downright infuriating puzzles, items that are impossible to pick up, and the fact that it's easy to miss things – and on top of that you'll find yourself saving furiously as you go simply because you keep getting brutally killed when you least expect it. But if you like *ATD*, you'll like this as it's almost exactly the same – which is also the reason we haven't given it a higher score. **Warcraft 2: Tides Of Darkness** (82: Recommended) Zablac – Strategy £44.99
Despite a dodgy AI *Warcraft 2* is very addictive and enjoyable – and it's even better still if you can take advantage of the multi-player option and play over a network. All in all, a definite 'must-buy' for anyone who liked the original.

Issue 37 – April 1996

Allied General

(83: Recommended) SSI/Mindscape – Wargame £44.99

The follow-up to the highly successful *Panzer General*. Not an awful lot is different, although the interface has been enhanced and thanks to Windows you can now have any resolution you like. The ground scale is a bit haphazard and varies too much from scenario to scenario but on the whole *Allied General* should find favour not only with wargamers but with casual wargamers as well. Simplistic yes, but there's far more to this game than most of its genre. (NB: Windows 95 required.)

Battleground Gettysburg

(87: Recommended) Empire Interactive – Strategy Wargame £39.99

The second in the *Battleground* series, this has an excellent feel for the subject matter (the battles in Gettysburg between 1-3 July 1863). The QuickTime movies really are a visual treat, the sound effects are excellent, and if you get stuck there's a comprehensive manual and a Quick Start guide. All in all, *Gettysburg* is well produced and highly playable – hex-head wargamers will love it. However, you'll need 130MB hard disk space for full installation, or 60MB otherwise. (NB: Windows 95 required.)

Big Red Racing

(87: Recommended) Domark – Racing £TBC

This is rather like a first-person perspective *Micro Machines*. It's brilliant fun, with 24 huge courses (including Mars, Venus, Moon and water) and there are loads of vehicles to choose from (snow ploughs, big foot monster trucks, Florida 'swampmaster' semi-amphibious propeller boat things...). You can even recreate *The Italian Job* bombing round Italy in a Mini!

Comix Zone

(68) Sega – Beat 'Em Up £29.99

Seriously tedious beat 'em up from Sega's newly-founded PC team. You play the part of a cartoonist trapped inside a comic book. Yawn.

Descent 2

(90: Classic) Interplay – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £TBC

Hardened *Descent* players will find adequate new perils to test them, but the game's well-paced enough for newbies. There are new weapons, monsties and great sound effects, plus 'Capture The Flag' team games where you can take sides and co-ordinate tactics to overcome your rivals. Overall it's a fun, involving and addictive game. If you loved the original, you'll be totally besotted with this one.

Ecco The Dolphin

(55) Sega – Arcade £29.99

The Mega Drive game from a few years ago. Unfortunately even the pretty animation can't save it from being totally boring. Next!

Extreme Games

(70) Psygnosis – Sport £29.99

The PlayStation 'trendy sports' game involving mountain bikes, skateboards, in-line skates and street luges, but the PSX version has excellent graphics and the animation is much, much better – it's too slow on a P133 and even with the detail switched down it plods along, thus destroying any enjoyment factor it might have had.

Ian Botham International Cricket

(78) Beam Software – Sport £34.99

Surprisingly good simulation of one of the world's duller sports. It's not as playable as the SNES version and has embarrassingly cheap and tacky FMV footage – essentially though it's playable and a good laugh.

NBA Live 96

(85: Recommended) Electronic Arts/ EA Sports – Sport £44.99

It's basketball's turn for EA's Virtual stadium treatment, which means four different angles for each camera. It's fast, with intuitive controls, reasonably well-animated player sprites as well as being playable in both one- and two-player modes. The in-game graphics are a bit muted and it can be hard to follow the ball when the game gets crowded but it's very playable all the same. There are three levels of difficulty and an option to play exhibition games or a full game season, plus arcade, simulation and custom modes.

Resurrection: Rise 2

(73) Acclaim/Mirage – Beat 'Em Up £44.99

Far better than the original, but a long way from being a classic. It borrows from other established beat 'em ups: it's got *Street Fighter*'s projectile weapons, *Mortal Kombat*'s death moves and the super-combo moves of Nintendo's *Killer Instinct*. It appears to have everything – moves, hordes of characters and secret warriors, bonus levels – but it doesn't have the same addictive gameplay. When you kick and punch the blows don't 'connect', and what's the point of a beat 'em up where you don't feel that you're inflicting any grief?

Tempest 2000

(85: Recommended) Atari – Arcade £29.99

Atari's 15-year old game is dragged kicking and screaming into the '90s, revamped with a kicking techno track. You have to defend your tunnel by shooting at the enemy craft trying to invade your space – but don't be deceived by the simplicity of it, it's not as easy as it sounds. Hours and hours of classic arcade fun.

Tomcat Alley

(34) Sega – Flight Sim £29.99

Repetitive gameplay, dodgy graphics. Ugh!

Top Gun

(92: Classic) MicroProse – Flight Sim £TBC

Excellent, apart from dodgy misleading views and a frame rate in hi-res which is only just acceptable on a P133. MicroProse have pulled off what everyone else has been trying to do, which is to add a cinematic storyline to a flight sim. These bits blend together without being overlong, so that no momentum is lost. Atmosphere, with a capital 'A'.

Warhammer

(73) Mindscape – Strategy Wargame £TBC

Addictive, challenging real-time strategy with an interesting setting and strong plot. Once you're hooked you'll come back for more, even though it really is much too hard, the control system is too fiddly and chance plays too much of a role. (NB: Windows 95 required.)



Well... *Quake's* hit the net, and people are pretty fired up about it. We're keen to know just what everyone thinks about this one, so let us know by writing or e-mailing the usual address.

QUAKE... IT'S HERE

Having downloaded the *Quake* demo from the iD FTP site, I have to say that it is quite possibly the most amazing game I have ever seen. It may only be a few levels, and it may look very much like *Doom* at first... but it 'feels' so good. It has to be one of the most fluid and natural games I have ever come across. It seems that yet again, iD have managed to produce a truly wonderful game.

T Baker, Manchester

QUAKE... AGAIN

So, *Quake* is finally 'nearly here'. How bloody thrilling... having downloaded the demo from the action games forum on CompuServe I have to say that it's one of the biggest disappointments I

have ever come across. Is it just me, or could this just as well be *Doom 3*? From what I've seen so far it hardly seems to be the 'great white hope' of PC gaming that everyone seems to think it is.

Adrian Kent, Essex

...AND AGAIN

Well, I don't know about you, but after playing the few boring levels of *Quake* that went on-line this weekend, I can't help feeling that *Duke Nukem 3D* is far superior. Whaddya reckon?

Paul Thomson, Reading

...AND AGAIN

Quake... read "excellent". Oh my god, I think I'm coming.

B Reid, Huddersfield

...AND AGAIN

The *Quake* demo... it may only be three levels, but fuck me if it isn't the best multi-player thing I've ever, ever seen! Playing it in eight-player mode has changed my life.

Anon

Opinion is certainly mixed on *Quake*, but the general vibe seems to be that it's pretty

Write to PC Zone

We know you've all got plenty to say, and there are numerous ways to transmit your delightful scrawlings to us here at *PC Zone*. You can either use the traditional method, often described as 'snail-mail' by the pretentious technocrats of this world...

WordProcessor

PC Zone

Dennis Publishing

19 Bolsover Street

London

W1P 7HJ

...or you can be really hip, trendy and cyber and do a whacky e-mail thing:

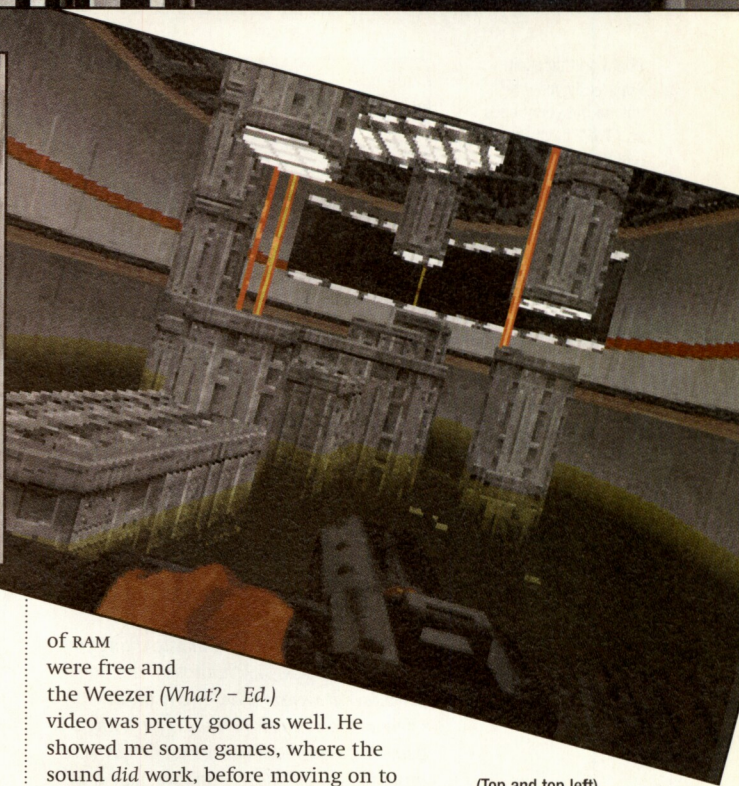
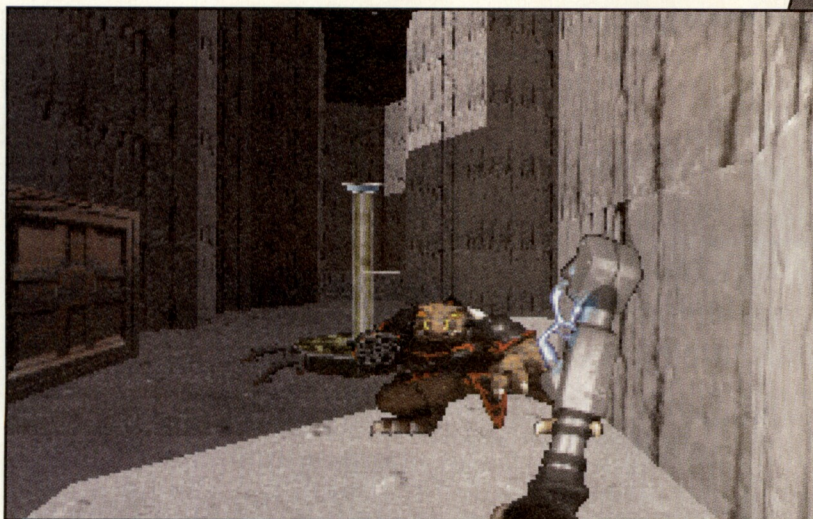
CompuServe: PC ZONE 100142, 2152

CIX: PCZONE@CIX.compulink.co.uk

damn hot. To quote Mr Peter Hawley (of the *PC Zone* cover disk department) "*Quake rocks! Quake... is for MEN*". And, indeed, it does look that way. In its rawest form, the *Quake* demo that appeared on February 24 is pretty boring once you've walked around for a few minutes - but as soon as you play a *Deathmatch* the whole world changes. Your social life will be eaten into. You WILL lose

(Right) Opinion seems to be split on the merits of *Quake*... we're giving it a thorough going over in this issue, but we reckon you should get ready to say goodbye to your social life and anything else that isn't related to the game.





your girlfriend and your friends (unless of course they play Quake) and you will start talking about 'amusing Quake moments'.

Okay, superficially it may not look greatly different, but it really is a staggering piece of software... and this is only a pre-release Alpha. Who knows what the finished game will be like? If it turns out to be anything like the difference between the Doom Alpha and the final game then we really are going to be in for a treat. Spoooge.

DUKEM VS QUAKE

I have just played Duke Nukem 3D shareware. WOW! What a fucking amazing game - it has mirrors goddamn it, pipe bombs are cool! And the graphics totally kick ass. So why am I telling you this? It's because I want to know if you have played Duke Nukem 3D and Quake one after the other, and which you think is better in your Doom-god-like opinion?

Check out my home page:

<http://cs.nott.ac.uk/~mjp/>

Yes, Duke Nukem 3D does 'kick ass', but when compared to Quake it doesn't really have a hope in hell. Duke features plenty of lovely effects and some really neat ideas... but from what we've seen so far Quake seems to carry things off with so much more panache. Duke will no doubt sell well... and at the moment it's the only game that can honestly claim to be 'better than Doom', but its reign as a superior product will be short-lived.

X-FILES GAME - part one

I read your thing about the possibility of an X-Files game. Do you have any idea if anything really is likely to happen? It's my favourite TV show of all time and a computer game could be so brilliant - I especially liked the Alone In The Dark style idea you mentioned in your letters pages a while ago. Sounds pretty smart - bet it never happens though.

Sarah Brown, Hunts

X-FILES GAME - part two

I don't know what you were going on about when you said in your last issue in your WordProcessor letters page that there was no news as yet of the X-Files computer game. I was looking through

the sci-fi section of CompuServe and found the X-Files library. When I opened it up I found that there were various different topics, so I ventured into the messages and discovered a letter about the X-Files computer game. I opened it up to find that some bloke (who I think is an American) had seen Fox Television on CNN showing the new X-Files game they were bringing out. Apparently it looks brilliant, with amazing graphics and puzzles. You should check it out and see for yourselves. Admit it, you were wrong. Now there is news.

James Collard, CompuServe 72016,716

PS. If it turns out that this bloke is lying, let me know and I'll send him junk mail full of insults.

I have no idea if this guy is lying or not as it's very difficult to get anyone to commit to the X-Files product. Obviously Fox will have a controlling influence over the product, but whether or not they'll produce it themselves, or pass it on to someone else is still unconfirmed. Many software houses that we have spoken to have expressed their desire to be involved with the product, but as yet it's all very much up in the air.

Don't junk-mail that guy yet - he may have some inside information, and let's face it, as X-Files is one of the biggest things on the planet at the moment, it seems highly unlikely that we won't see at least one computer game based on the thing. Watch the news pages over the coming months.

WINDOWS 95 - THE CONTINUING SAGA

"Windows 95 will be the best thing since sliced bread," the mags chanted. "Windows 95 will bring about world peace," Bill Gates promised. Hmmm... in my experience Windows 95 actually completely screws up sound cards.

Two friends of mine recently bought brand spanking new P75s, much to their joy and my envy (me being a 486 owner). Both machines came with that modern miracle, Windows 95. Off I went to my first friend's house to have a look at his box of delights and the fantastic new operating system all the mags were on about. I was fairly impressed, all 8MB

of RAM were free and the Weezer (*What? - Ed.*) video was pretty good as well. He showed me some games, where the sound *did* work, before moving on to his favourite, FIFA 96.

Alas, when he loaded it there was not a sound to be heard. He told me that he was going to sort it out and I left pretty unimpressed (Syndicate went a bit funny but we managed to straighten it out).

Now on to my second friend. The first game we played was Magic Carpet, which was a joy to behold after playing it at home on my lowly 486, the sound was fine. Next Hi-Octane, another Bullfrog masterpiece with working sound. Then Wing Commander III... the silent intro indicated what was to come, but the only sound to be heard was the music, no speech or sound effects.

We gave up and loaded Worms instead; yet again, music but no effects. We went to the set-up screen and re-detected the sound card, but still no sound effects. We went back and tried again, when for some reason it came up with different settings than the time before, although we still heard nothing.

It looks to me as though Windows 95 constantly changes the settings of the sound card, which makes your sound card unreliable. The cards in my friends' machines were definitely not at fault as the one in the second PC is a genuine SoundBlaster, and the first is an Aztec. Does anyone else have these problems?

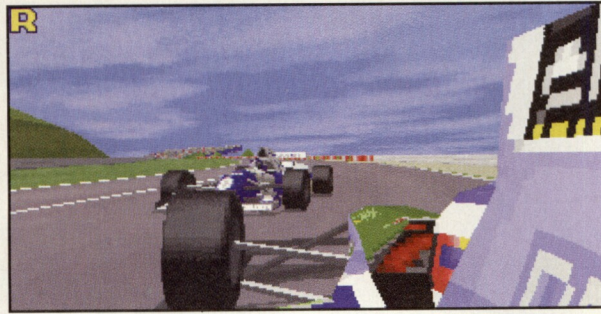
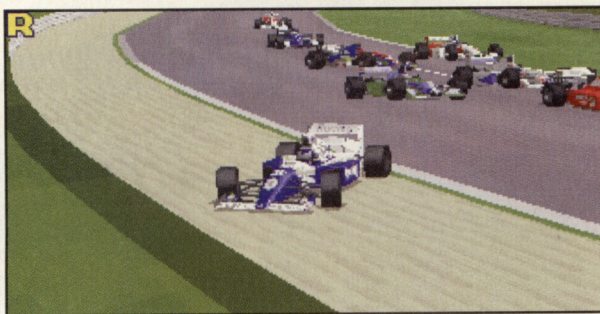
David Taylor, Seaford (near Brighton)

Unfortunately compatibility problems will continue to crop up for years to come with Windows 95, and the reasons for this are many and varied. A major element in the equation revolves around how the games (namely older ones) were programmed, and how they made use of the sound drivers.

Games that use non-standard ways of accessing the sound hardware will no doubt be completely stuffed, as Windows 95 is a very 'conformist' operating system... if you don't play by the rules it gets all upset and then goes and has a sulk.

(Top and top left)
Duke Nukem 3D giving Quake a run for its money? Nah, they're both bloody great but Quake's got the edge.

(Right and far right)
Apparently you'll be
able to get your hands
on *F1GP2* before the
real thing kicks off in
Australia... And it's
about time too!



« PC ZONE COVERS... NICE AND SILKY

I notice that PC Zone has recently lost the old 'glossy' look and is gradually moving towards a silkier and sort of satiny one. What's going on? Is this going to stay or is the look and feel of the mag going to be different every month?

H Bowden, Notts

The cover finish is consciously changing, and this month's 'look' and 'feel' is more or less what we are planning to stick with. There are a number of reasons for doing this... but one of the main ones is that we think it's pretty classy – and we hope that you do too. Any comments?

WHAT'S GOING ON?

The last few issues of PC Zone seem to have calmed down quite a bit – what's going on? We haven't had any tits, there hasn't been a great deal of swearing and you haven't openly insulted anyone. Are you consciously toning the mag down?

Sam Neilson, Birmingham

No. Piss off. Happy?

NEW COMMAND & CONQUER STUFF?

Just one simple question: why is it that MicroProse keep putting back *F1GP2*? Surely by putting out release dates and then scrapping them the general public could start to wonder if the game is really worth waiting for. I saw the demo on your stand at the Shopper Show and asked the release date and was told Feb; then I see the review in PC Zone (great mag, by the way – but you know that!) and enquire, only to be told March! How long will all this go on?

On the C&C front I haven't seen any aliens (only those viscid things) but after being told that there's some new stuff knocking around on CompuServe I found out there's some dinosaurs!!!

If you "GO Gamers" on CompuServe then look in the Wargames A-I you'll also find a bunch of new levels! But you clever chaps probably know that!

Richard Windsor

CompuServe 100531,241

Dinosaurs? Are you sure? The aliens are only a rumour as far as we know, and while I know several people who swear blind that they exist I haven't actually seen anything yet. If anyone has got to the level why don't they take a screenshot and send it in? We'd be happy to print it just to prove a point.

On the C&C 'extras' front, there are going to be all sorts of things happening this year.

Obviously Covert Operations will be in the shops by the time that you read this, and you can find a review in this issue. Later in the year there is what is effectively Command & Conquer 'zero' – a game called Red Alert which tells of all the events leading up until the first game... how the Brotherhood was formed and what happened when the Tiberium started to appear.

Then... next year, we'll get Command & Conquer 2: Tiberium Sun (which is the thing featured in the back of the C&C manual) and this is the 'proper' sequel. As far as we know (the guys at Westwood aren't talking very much) this picks up the story after the original game and tells of what happens to the earth as the Tiberium gradually takes over everything. A lot of the new technology introduced later on in C&C will obviously be featured along with lots of other clever new toys. Cool... can't wait.

ACTUA SOCCER VS FIFA 96

I'm pretty new to the PC and I want to get the definitive soccer game. I've read lots of magazine reviews and opinion seems to be split between FIFA 96 from EA Sports and Actua Soccer from Gremlin. Do you think you can shed any light on the situation? I just want a good game to play with my mates.

Tony Johnstone, Devon

Oh god... opinion is pretty split here as well. Myself and Jeremy are total Actua Soccer aficionados – it may have problems and bugs, but when it comes down to it, it really is a bloody playable game. But on the other hand, Chris and Pete are total FIFA-heads and continue to whine on and on about how FIFA is so much better. My personal opinion is that FIFA does too much of the work for you and therefore makes you feel as though you're not actually playing.

Despite the problems with both games though, there will no doubt be an improved FIFA 97 later in the year, and if you look at our Blueprint pages this month you'll see a preview of the follow-up to Actua Soccer that carries the Euro 96 licence. This is a seriously enhanced version of Actua and could very well end up being THE definitive footie game. Watch for our exclusive review and demo next month.

F1GP2 PERFECT?

An easy question for you. If Grand Prix 2 is (in your own words) "an absolute masterpiece" why didn't it get 100%?

Anon, CompuServe 100322, 651

In our own words (again) "Because it wasn't worth it". Okay, I think that answers your question. Is that all right with you?

F1GP2 – NOW OR NEVER

When the hell is *F1GP2* going to come out? I've read loads of reviews of it now, and I really want to get my hands on a copy. With the 'real' GP starting soon in Australia, I'd like to have the game in time to compare it to the real thing. Are MicroProse really going to bother? Or should I buy a PlayStation and wait for the Sony F1 game that looks so good?

Dave McIntyre, Oxon

MicroProse assure us that *F1GP2* will be out before the Australian Grand Prix. Quite whether or not this will happen is unclear as we go to press, but from what we've seen we can think of no reason why it should be out late. The damn thing has to be finished soon!

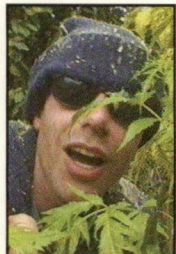
DUNGEON KEEPER DELAY... WHY?

Seeing as PC Zone seems to be the authority on all things *Dungeon Keeper* related, can anyone tell me why the game is now so late? I was under the impression that it was going to be out before Christmas. Then it was supposed to be March – but what now? Is there a final release date?

Jason Grant, Bucks

One of the main reasons for the delay was that the team at Bullfrog wasn't entirely happy with the way that things were working out. Now though, having spoken to many of the people concerned, we can confirm that it will be out in April. Hoo-bloody-rah. Everyone connected to the project is now apparently happy with it and Peter Molyneux is said to now be "really into it". So that's good news, isn't it? Hopefully we'll be able to bring you a review next month. Let's all keep our fingers crossed, eh? Z

Culky Says...



DEAR ENGLAND, Alright? Culky here isn't it, from London, England. Well, I'm back at mi mum's flat now in Feltham Green, and I'm writing to you (care of Culky's Commemoration Postage Stamps from the last issue!) from in front of mi mum's telly, like what I said I would, and Culk never doesn't do what he reckoned on he would of done, so I am, isn't it. Guess what old Colin 'got a saw' of when he got back to mi mum's?

A newspaper by the telly, what said in big letters *Back to Basics: A New Government Agenda*. It then went on using long words what ain't 'proper' words, so I couldn't read them and that. But Culky doesn't never have to read nothing... I know exactly what back to basics means!

How to get a decent bird!

...That basic enough for ya, is it? Eh? Go on, try tellin' Colin it ain't!

Culk knows that everyone wants a nice girlfriend... you know, like one of them pretty foreign ones and that. Well, I've got a few tips. You just do what old Culkus tells ya, and you'll be hooking in some big fish!

Firstly, a lot of foreign girls seem to like British geezers that are shy and quiet and that, and secondly they like blokes what look like they got proper jobs, and last of all they want short, neat hair like Culky's got.

So, get a cheap suit from Oxfam, and get your mum to cut your hair like what she likes it cut, and lastly, spray paint your cheeks bright red, like as if you're so incredibly shy that you blush all the time, even in your sleep! When you've got that all sorted, and checked in the mirror that your face is as red as a Ferrari, go cast your lure!

Just go up to any girl you think is nice and that, and then stand there right in front of her blushing... push

them glowing red cheeks right in her boat, showing her how unusually shy you are, don't say nothing to her, just stand next to her looking shy, staring down at the floor and that. Push those cheeks right in her face - they'll come running for it, you trust old Culkus!



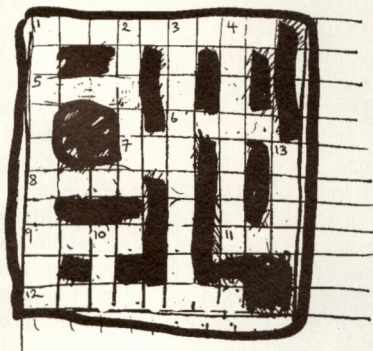
Culky's cryptic crossword

Culky's done his own crossword isn't it. If you can do it and that, cut it out and send it in, and you'll win the badge what are showed on this page.

(Remember Culks don't spell too good though! - Ed.)

Across

- 1) A bloke in a wig, a load of coppers, a jury and defendant (5,4)
- 5) Abbreviation of what you'll be doing in front of the mirror after getting on the wrong side of Culky (4)
- 6) The women in Mexico (4)
- 7) Go on! I dare ya, stick one on mi ... (3)
- 8) As Colin's mum says to her son - "Give it ... Colin!" (4)
- 9) Culky's relative (4)
- 11) Culky ain't taking the ... for this offence? (3)
- 12) Culky's cooking lessons (8)



Down

- 1) Culky's VW (6,4)
- 2) You'll get some London ... (6)
- 3) Fist with targets? (4,6)
- 4) Like what you never say to a copper (5,3)
- 6) Not at all interested (abbreviation) (3)
- 13) A hard smack (4)

The solution to it, is going to be put in next month's Culky Says, so if you're gonna try for the badge and that, you better post it before then or you'll get some 'cheat-cosh', care of Colin. And remember, if a judge asks you if you know a Mr Colin Culk of Feltham tell 'im you ain't never seen nothing. Like what I does.

Cheers!... Culky! **Z**

Culky's Community Cures

It's time for... Colin's racy, hard, and fast advice column. Your problems are Culky's pleasure!

Dear Mr Culk,

I was recently summons to court for non-payment of 27 parking fines, I'd clocked them up over the last two years. I've got money, that's no problem, it's just that I don't want to give it to the police, that's all. I've never been in trouble with the law before but it looks like I'll have to pay up or go down. What shall I do?

David Herrity, Sussex

Culky says... Dear Dave,
DON'T NEVER PAY THEM COURTS NOTHING!...

Culky also says...

Video a small bit of Casualty off of the TV and that, phone up the court a day before your case (remember to dial 141 first), play the video of Casualty in the background to get the real hospital 'feel', and say you've got a sore eye, and you're actually in hospital, and they'll have to make a court judgement in your absence. They'll write to you saying they have, and that if you don't pay all costs within 14 days from that letter, the bailiffs is coming in!...

Culky then says...

But don't care nothing about that. When them bailiffs come round, put a wig on, and lipstick, and say you're your mum and that you ain't seen you for years. Tell them bailiffs that your son is very sick somewhere with a sore eye but you don't know where his sore eye is! And don't forget to end with... "You ain't seen nothing never!"

Dear Mr Culk,

I saw the cover disc on PC Zone where your VW 'tank' shot rockets at a computer company. I've got a VW Beetle, and it's more heavily armed than yours!... I challenge you to a VW showdown.

Stanley Thastern, Cumbria

Culky says... Dear Stan,

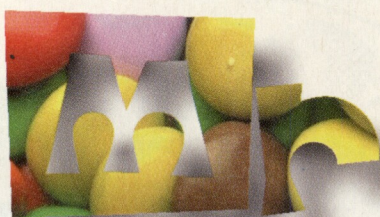
Oh yeah, you reckon on it, is it? Before you go shoutin' and a routin', get yourself a good hard saw of the picture what I took of Culky's new tank. Tooled up nice, isn't it? I know how to get to Cumbria isn't it, you'll hear me coming - welcome to the party pal!

Culky also says...

Better watch out for my new 'side-winders', an' all!

(Below) So Stan from Cumbria thinks he can rocket challenge old Culkus, eh? Well, take a ganders at my VW tank, you northern git.





Q H DEAR. I FIND MYSELF IN A BIT OF a 'part two' situation. So let's have a quick recap:

■ Last month's Mr Cursor ended in the middle of a court hearing, with yours truly in the role of the counsel for the prosecution. The defendant was a 'fictional' game called *SpaceWar 9*, and the charge brought against it was that it was using modern hardware as a crutch to hold up old routines, rather than exploring its potential on a broader, deeper, level. Here's a snippet:

Prosecution: Hmm... If I were to take a high speed film of you and then played it back at the standard rate, would you look - shall we say - 'jerky'?

SpaceWar 9: Eh? Of course I would. Oh, I think I see what you're getting at, but you can't blame me for the fact that we've all got top kit while you guys haven't! (*SpaceWar 9 is an American product - Ed.*)

Prosecution: And I'm not trying to. It's not the hardware that's on trial here, but how cleverly it's being utilised. So what would be



happening 'between' these jerks? On my 'high speed' film? Even on a 'top' computer? In your opinion?

SpaceWar 9: Er, nothing, obviously. Or not very much, anyway.

He's afraid of... last month's Mr Cursor, and live TV

(At this point time was called, earning the defence council a 30 day adjournment - which they spent in the library. The court, however, now reconvenes.)

Judge: I hereby dismiss the jury, and end this trial. It was going nowhere, and was travelling there so slowly that even I - Judge Bufton Tufton, barely conscious at the best of times, even when being whipped by a leather clad sado harlot - was becoming weary. All costs will, naturally, be covered by the tax payer. And all lawyers involved will receive a nine trillion pound bonus... just for being lawyers. Well done the legal profession!

Mr Cursor goes media crazy

Mr Cursor: (Thinking quickly) Oh shit. So that's that then. Bugger! My next stage of questioning has been scuppered. But still... not all is lost. After all, there are bound to be some media folk milling around on the steps outside the courthouse. Let's see what happens when I walk through the door...

ITN Camera Crew: What are your thoughts on the decision?

BBC Camera Crew: You must be devastated...

Hellol! Magazine: Can we photograph your dog? Your lounge? You and your wife sitting next to Jonathan Ross (and his wife)? What about your garden? What kind of wallpaper have you got?

Sky News Camera Crew: Here's some money - £15000! Come with us!

A Daily Mail Journo: Here's £8000! We want you to denounce computer games as the work of the Devil!

A Sun Journo: Let's talk about a centre spread! Then we'll turn it into a book with Random House! Megabucks!

Random House: A book first! Then a serialisation in *The Sun*! You can't lose! A ghost writer! Megabucks! Gary Bushell!

Weird bloke in yellow cardigan: Sir, I represent the Church Of Scientology. Follow me and I shall take you to Venus.

The Good Morning TV Crew: Would you consider an interview with Richard and Judy? Please? We've got a helicopter!

(Mr Cursor considers the options...) Wow! That's quite a choice. Which would you have picked? Venus sounded tempting,

and so did being photographed with Jonathan Ross and his wife Jane, but I think I'll go for the Richard and Judy interview instead. (They represent the 'common folk'... after all, he got off on a shoplifting charge, and she's, er, sort of like his mum, except she's actually married to him or something.) (Eh? - Ed.)

So here we go... I've managed (in a pretend sort of way) to be an interviewee on *Good Morning*. Brill chopper flight over, and now we're live! In front of millions! (Oh no! Sudden panic!)

Judy: Good Lord! Fred's just fallen off the weather map.

Richard: Oh well, it's what everyone's been waiting for! But forget that, we've got an impromptu guest. It's someone called Mr Cursor. He's got some deeply disturbing news, apparently, regarding...

Judy: Wait! We've got a newsflash. Femi?

Femi: Thanks Judy. Fred's dead. Official! He was dragged to the bottom of the Mersey by his waterlogged jumper. Back to you, Judy.

Judy: Thanks Femi. So, Mr Cursor, what have you got to say? Be quick, though, we're running late...

Mr Cursor: Um, um, it's that, erm, well... I just reckon that modern computers are quick enough to do proper artificial intelligence routines, but that, er, most of the time, er, well, er, it's all graphics, isn't it? Not that there's anything wrong with good graphics, but, um, they never seem to bother with the, er... er... well, let me put it like this... oh, hang on... sorry, I'm really nervous, but...

Richard: (Interrupting) Now it's time to go over to Brian Turner, who's going to show us how to make a (chuckle) 'proper' Yorkshire Pudding. Brian?

Brian: Or Yorkshire pud as we call it up north, Richard (snigger). And can I just quickly say that Artificial Intelligence won't matter within five years anyway. All computer games will be gargantuan multi-player affairs by then, played over the videophone or whatnot.

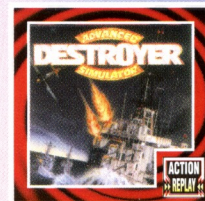
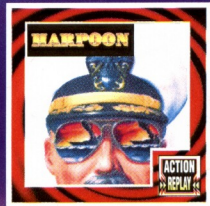
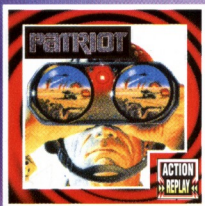
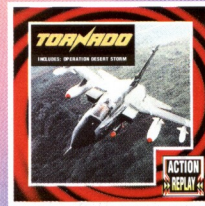
Judy: Really? Well I never! That's so amazingly futuristic!

Brian: I know! But the programmers will simply supply the locations, the goal, and the 'virtual hardware' with which to reach it. The intelligence will be supplied by the humans taking part. But anyway, back to the Yorkshire Puds. First we need the flour...

Mr Cursor: (Quietly) I'll get my coat then. Z

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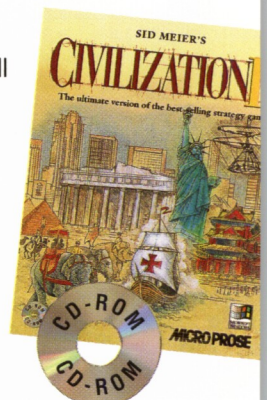


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MICRO PROSE

Spectrum Holobyte/MicroProse
World Wide Web Site. <http://www.microprose.com>.

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